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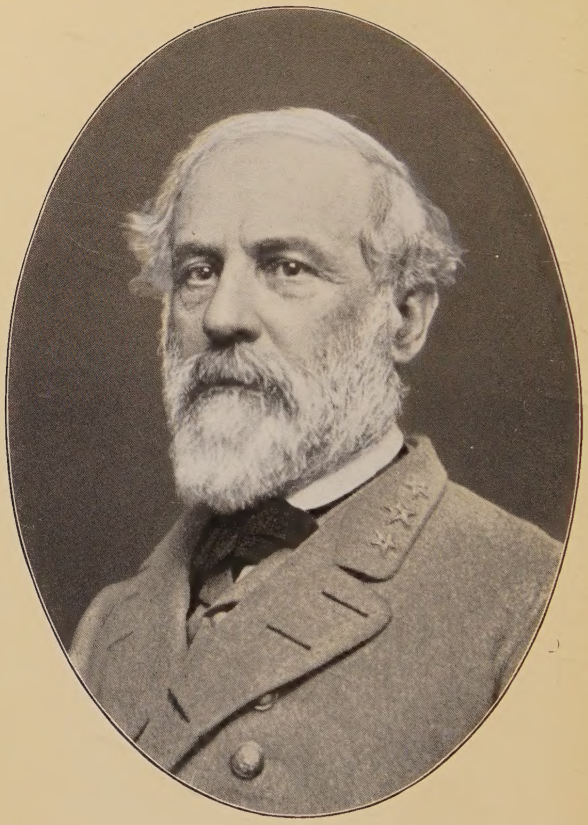

General Robert E. Lee.

THE NOVELS, STORIES, SKETCHES AND POEMS OF THOMAS NELSON PAGE

# ROBERT E. LEE

## MAN AND SOLDIER

I

Ὦ ξεῖν' ἄγγειλον Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῇδε
κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

"AS GALLANT AND BRAVE AN ARMY AS EVER EXISTED":

THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA:

ON WHOSE IMPERISHABLE DEEDS

AND INCOMPARABLE CONSTANCY

THE FAME OF THEIR OLD COMMANDER

WAS FOUNDED

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tions, which it is hoped may prove sufficiently complete to enable the interested reader to follow intelligently the masterly campaigns on which Lee's fame as a soldier is founded.

The authorities consulted in my studies cover a wide range of reports, histories, biographies, personal memoirs, and personal letters, to which I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness, especially to General Long's "Life of Lee," Dr. J. W. Jones's "Personal Reminiscences of Lee," General Fitzhugh Lee's "Lee," and Captain R. E. Lee's "Personal Recollections and Letters of General Lee."

I desire, however, to signalize certain authorities whose masterly studies have been found generally so accurate as to appear conclusive on the subjects of which they have treated. These are Mr. John C. Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," Colonel William Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," Colonel G. F. R. Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson," Major John Bigelow, Jr.'s, "Campaign of Chancellorsville" (the most complete and authoritative history of any battle ever fought on American soil), and, finally, General A. A. Humphreys's "The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65." These I have often followed closely and, though I have not always adopted

their conclusions, I desire to record my indebtedness to them in the fullest possible way.

I further desire to make my acknowledgments to Colonel Hunter Liggett, Colonel Charles G. Treat, and the officers who accompanied them in the War College expedition of 1911 over the battle-fields of Virginia, for their courtesy extended me during that expedition and for the great aid which I derived from their careful and thoughtful discussions of Lee's campaigns in Virginia. The historical spirit in which these soldiers have approached their subject is one I have endeavored to emulate, even though I may have done so vainly, and is the best assurance that in time a complete history of the great war will be written.

THOS. NELSON PAGE.

WASHINGTON, *October*, 1911.

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# INTRODUCTORY

THIS study of a great American is not written with the expectation or even with the hope that the writer can add anything to the fame of Lee; but rather in obedience to a feeling that as the son of a Confederate soldier, as a Southerner, as an American, he, as a writer, owes something to himself and to his countrymen which he should endeavor to pay, though it may be but a mite cast into the Treasury of Abundance.

The subject is not one to be dealt with in the language of eulogy. To attempt to decorate it with panegyric would but belittle it. What the writer proposes to say will be based upon public records; on the studies of those whose authority is unquestioned; or on the testimony of those personal witnesses who by character and opportunity for observation would be held to furnish evidence by which the gravest concerns of life would be decided.

At the outset I venture to quote the words of the Master of Historians, not to express my achievement, but my endeavor:

"With reference to the narrative of events, far from permitting myself to derive it from the first source that came to hand, I did not even trust my own impressions; but it rests partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me, the accuracy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible.

"My conclusions have cost me some labor from the want of coincidence between accounts of the same occurrences by different eye-witnesses, arising sometimes from imperfect memory, sometimes from undue partiality for one side or the other." *

True enough it is, Lee was assailed—and assailed with a rancor and persistence which have undoubtedly left their deep impression on the minds of a large section of his countrymen; but, as the years pass by, the passions and prejudices which attempted to destroy him have been gradually giving place to a juster conception of the lineaments of Truth.

Among his warmest admirers to-day are some who fought against him. No more appreciative study of him has been written than that by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, whose breadth, clear-

* Thucydides's "History of the Peloponnesian War," chap. I.

ness of vision, and classic charm as a writer were only equalled by his gallantry in the Army of the Potomac, where he won his first laurels.

Unhappily, the world judges mainly by the measure of success, and though Time hath his revenges, and finally rights many wrongs, the man who fails of an immediate end appears to the body of his contemporaries, and often to the generations following, to be a failure. Yet from such seed as this have sprung the richest fruits of civilization. In the Divine Economy appears a wonderful mystery. Through all the history of sublime endeavor would seem to run the strange truth enunciated by the Divine Master: that he who loses his life for the sake of the Truth shall find it.

But although, as was said by the eloquent Holcombe of Lee just after his death, "No calumny can ever darken his fame, for History has lighted up his image with her everlasting lamp," yet after forty years there still appears in certain quarters a tendency to rank General Lee, as a soldier, among those captains who failed. Some historians, looking with narrow vision at but one side, and many readers, ignorant of all the facts, honestly take this view. A general he was, they say, able enough for de-

fence; but he was uniformly defeated when he took the offensive. He failed at Antietam; he was defeated at Gettysburg; he could not drive Grant out of Virginia; therefore he must be classed among captains of the second rank only.

Iteration and reiteration, to the ordinary observer, however honest he may be, gather accumulated force and oftentimes usurp the place of truth. The public has not time, nor does it care, to go deeper than the ordinary presentation of a case. It is possible, therefore, that unless the truth be set forth so plainly that it cannot be mistaken, this estimate of Lee as a captain may in time become established as the general, if not the universal, opinion of the public.

If, however, Lee's reputation becomes established as among the second class of captains, rather than as among the first, the responsibility for it will rest, not upon Northern writers, but upon the Southerners themselves. For the facts are plain.

We of the South have been wont to leave the writing of history mainly to others, and it is far from a complete excuse that whilst others were writing history we were making it. It is as much the duty of a people to disprove any charge blackening their fame as it is of an individual.

Indeed, the injury is infinitely more far-reaching in the former case than in the latter.

Lee's character I deem absolutely the fruit of the Virginian civilization which existed in times past. No drop of blood alien to Virginia coursed in his veins; his rearing was wholly within her borders and according to the principles of her life.

Whatever of praise or censure, therefore, shall be his must fall fairly on his mother, Virginia, and the civilization which existed within her borders. The history of Lee is the history of the South during the greatest crisis of her existence. For with his history is bound up the history of the Army of Northern Virginia, on whose imperishable deeds and incomparable constancy rests his fame.

The reputation of the South has suffered because we have allowed rhetoric to usurp the place of history. We have furnished many orators, but few historians. But all history at last must be the work, not of the orator, but of the historian. Truth, simply stated, like chastity in a woman's face, is its own best advocate; its simplest presentation is its strongest proof.

# ROBERT E. LEE

## MAN AND SOLDIER

## I

"A Prince once said of a Monarch slain,
'Taller he seems in Death.'"

—HOPE.

# ROBERT E. LEE

## MAN AND SOLDIER

### I

### EARLY LIFE

ON a plateau about a mile from the south bank of the Potomac River, in the old colonial county of Westmoreland, in what used to be known as the "Northern Neck,"—that portion of Virginia which Charles II in his heedlessness once undertook to grant to his friends and favorites, Culpeper and Arlington,—stands a massive brick mansion, one of the most impressive piles of brick on this continent. Built in the form of a broad H, it looks, even in its dilapidation, as though it might have been erected by Elizabeth and bombarded by Cromwell. It had to be built strong; for in those days the Indians were just across the blue mountains to the westward, and roving bands were likely to appear at any time, following the broad river in search of scalps or booty, and ready

to fall on any defenceless family in their way. The broad chimneys clustered above the roof of each wing are said to have been connected in old times by a pavilion which was used for dances and such like entertainments. No picture of the mansion gives any adequate idea of its châteaulike massiveness. It was built by Thomas Lee, grandson of Richard Lee, the immigrant, who came to Virginia about 1641–42, and founded a family which has numbered among its members as many men of distinction as any family in America. It was through him that Charles II, when an exile in Brussels, is said to have been offered an asylum and a kingdom in Virginia. When the first mansion erected was destroyed by fire, Queen Anne, in recognition of the services of her faithful counsellor in Virginia, sent over a liberal contribution toward its rebuilding. Founded about 1725–30, it bears the old English name, Stratford, after the English estate of Richard Lee, and for many generations, down to the last generation, it was the home of the Lees of Virginia.

This mansion has a unique distinction among historical houses in this country; for in one of its chambers were born two signers of the Declaration of Independence: Richard Henry Lee, who, in obedience to the mandate of the Virginia Con-

vention, moved the resolution in Congress to declare the Colonies free and independent States, and Francis Lightfoot Lee, his brother. But it has a yet greater distinction. In one of its chambers was born, on the 19th of January, 1807, Robert E. Lee, whom many students of military history believe to have been not only the greatest soldier of his time, and, taking all things together, the greatest captain of the English-speaking race, but the loftiest character of his generation; one rarely equalled, and possibly never excelled, in all the annals of the human race.

His reputation as a soldier has been dealt with by others much better fitted to speak of it than I; and in what I shall have to say as to this I shall often follow them, drawing from their studies what seem to me the necessary conclusions presented. The campaigns in which that reputation was achieved are now the studies of all military students throughout the world, quite as much as are the campaigns of Hannibal and Cæsar, of Cromwell and Marlborough, of Napoleon and Wellington.

"According to my notion of military history," says Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, "there is as much instruction both in strategy and in tactics to be gleaned from General Lee's operations

of 1862 as there is to be found in Napoleon's campaigns of 1796." In recognition of this fact the United States War College annually sends an expedition of picked officers to study the movements of these campaigns on the fields on which he gained his renown.

Robert Edward Lee was the fourth son of General Henry Lee, known in history as "Light Horse Harry" Lee (who in his youth had been the gallant young commander of the "Partisan Legion"), and the third son of Anne Carter, of Shirley, his second wife, a pious and gracious representative of the old Virginia family whose home still stands in simple dignity upon the banks of the James, and has been far-famed for generations as one of the best-known seats of the old Virginia hospitality. His three older brothers were Henry (who was the only child of "Light Horse Harry" Lee's first marriage), Charles Carter, and Sidney Smith, all of whom were unusually clever men. His two sisters were Mildred and Anne. In his veins flowed the best blood of the gentry of the Old Dominion, and, for that matter, of England, and surrounding him from his earliest childhood were the best traditions of the old Virginia life. Amid these, and these alone, he grew to manhood. On both sides of his house his ancestors for genera-

tions had been councillors and governors of Virginia, and had contributed their full share toward Virginia's greatness.

Richard Lee, "the immigrant," was a scion of an old family, ancient enough to have fought at Hastings and to have followed Richard of the Lion Heart to the Holy Land.* On this side of the water they had ever stood among the highest. The history of no two families was more indissolubly bound up with the history of Virginia than that of the Lees and the Carters. Thus, Lee was essentially the type of the cavalier of the Old Dominion, to whom she owed so much of her glory. Like Sir Walter Raleigh, he could number a hundred gentlemen among his kindred, and, even at his greatest, he was in character the type of his order.

In the youth of young Henry Lee, Princeton was the most popular of the colleges with the Virginians, and Henry Lee was a student at Princeton when the Revolutionary War broke out. Nearly all the young men of his age were deeply interested in the matters which brought on the war, and probably because of the leading part Virginia took in the movement for independence, and possibly because of the prominent part that his kinsmen

* "Lee of Virginia," by Edmund I. Lee.



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took in Virginia, no sooner had war begun, with the battle of Lexington, than young Henry Lee left his studies and joined the army. He was commissioned a captain at the age of nineteen, and by his soldierly qualities soon became a marked man. He rendered such signal service in the early campaigns of the war, and showed such courage, ability, and dash, that he early became a favorite with Washington, and, as was stated by his famous son long afterward, "in the difficult and critical operations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, from 1777 to 1780, inclusive, he was always placed near the enemy, intrusted with the command of outposts, the superintendence of scouts, and that kind of service which requires unusual qualities of resourcefulness and self-reliance." *

His activity and daring in scouting near the enemy drew their attention, and they set to work to capture him. Knowing that he was quartered about six miles below Valley Forge, a surprise was attempted by them. A body of two hundred horse set out one night, and having taken a roundabout route, they eluded his outposts and reached about daybreak the house where he was quartered. In the house were only eight men: Captain Lee,

* "Memoirs of the War of '76," by H. Lee, p. 16.

Lieutenant Lindsay, Major Gemieson, a corporal, and four men. Though surprised, the soldiers in the house, instead of surrendering as they were expected to do, under Lee's direction barricaded the doors and fought the assailants off, forcing them finally to retire with a loss of five men killed and a number more wounded. Then, as they were attempting to carry off the horses of the party, Lee hurried the departure of the enemy by shouting to his men to fire away, as the infantry were coming, and they would bag them all. As soon as they retired he sallied forth, got his men to horse, and pursued the English force to their main body.

For this exploit, together with his services in the campaign before it, which Washington highly commended, Congress promoted Captain Lee to the rank of major, and gave him an independent command, known as a "partisan corps," composed first of two, and later of three troops of horse.

That summer he took part in the capture of Stony Point, which gave Mad Anthony Wayne his fame, and a little later he planned and executed the surprise and capture of Paulus Hook under the nose of the British warships and the garrisons of the New York forts. For this exploit Congress again signally honored him—thanking him pub-

licly, and striking a medal in his honor, a tribute paid to no other officer below the rank of general during the war.*

When the chief seat of war was transferred to the South, toward the end of 1780, Major Lee moved to join the Southern army, opposing Cornwallis in South Carolina, and Congress in recognition of his distinguished services made him, on Washington's recommendation, a lieutenant-colonel. He took part in all the battles of the Southern campaign, and rendered such service that, when broken in health and partly because disappointed of a reward which he thought due him he retired about February, 1782, General Greene wrote of him to the president of Congress in the following warm terms: "Lieutenant-Colonel Lee retired for a time for the recovery of his health. I am more indebted to this officer than to any other for the advantages gained over the enemy in the operations of the last campaign, and should be wanting in gratitude not to acknowledge the importance of his services, a detail of which is his best panegyric." †

Later on Colonel Lee became a member of Congress, and was so noted for his eloquence that when

* Lee's "Memoirs of the War of '76," p. 23.
† *Ibid.*, p. 41.

in 1799 Washington died, he was selected by Congress to deliver the official eulogy on his old commander and life-long friend. Subsequently he became the governor of Virginia, and served as such for three terms, and when the rebellion broke out in Pennsylvania, he was chosen to command the troops mobilized for its suppression.

Thus, the blood that coursed through the veins of Robert E. Lee was that of a soldier.

It has been well said that knowledge of a man's ideals is the key to his character. Tell us his ideals and we can tell you what manner of man he is. Lee's ideal character was close at hand from his earliest boyhood. His earliest days were spent in a region filled with traditions of him who, having consecrated his life to duty, had with the fame of a great soldier attained such a standard of virtue that if we would liken him to other governors we must go back to Marcus Aurelius, to St. Louis, and to William the Silent.

Not far from Stratford, within an easy ride, in the same old colonial county of Westmoreland, on the bank of the noble river whose broad waters reflect the arching sky, spanning Virginia and Maryland, was Wakefield, the plantation which had the distinction of having given birth to the Father of his Country. Thus, on this neighbor-

hood, the splendor of the evening of his noble life, just closed, had shed a peculiar glory. And not a great way off, in a neighboring county on the banks of the same river, was the home of his manhood, where in majestic simplicity his ashes repose, making Mount Vernon a shrine for lovers of liberty of every age and every clime.

On the wall at Shirley, Lee's mother's home, among the portraits of the Carters, hangs a full-length portrait of Washington, in a general's uniform, given by him to General Nelson, who gave it to his daughter, Mrs. Carter. Thus, in both his ancestral homes the boy from his cradle found an atmosphere redolent at once of the greatness of Virginia's past and of the memory of the preserver of his country.

It was Lee's own father, the gallant and gifted "Light Horse Harry" Lee, who, as eloquent in debate as he had been eager in battle, having, as stated, been selected by Congress to deliver the memorial address on Washington, had coined the golden phrase which, reaching the heart of America, has become his epitaph and declared him by the unanimous voice of a grateful people, "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

How passionately the memory of "Light Horse

Harry" Lee was revered by his sons we know, not only from the life of Robert E. Lee, himself, but from that most caustic of American philippics, the "Observations on the Writings of Thomas Jefferson, with Particular Reference to the Attacks they contain on the Memory of the late General Henry Lee, in a series of Letters by Henry Lee of Virginia."

Mr. Jefferson, with all his prestige and genius, had found a match when he aroused "Black Harry" Lee by a charge of ingratitude on the part of his father to the adored Washington. In no family throughout Virginia was Washington's name more revered than among the Lees, who were bound to him by every tie of gratitude, of sentiment, and of devotion.

Thus, the impress of the character of Washington was natural on the plastic and serious mind of the thoughtful son of "Light Horse Harry."

One familiar with the life of Lee cannot help noting the strong resemblance of his character in its strength, its poise, its rounded completeness, to that of Washington, or fail to mark what influence the life of Washington had on the life of Lee. The stamp appears upon it from his boyhood, and grows more plain as his years progress.

Just when the youth definitely set before him-

self the character of Washington we may not know; but it must have been at an early date. The famous story of the sturdy little lad and the cherry-tree must have been well known to young Lee from his earliest boyhood, for it was floating about that region when Parson Weems came across it as a neighborhood tradition, and made it a part of our literature.* It has become the fashion to deride such anecdotes, but this much, at least, may be said of this story, that however it may rest solely on the authority of the simple, itinerant preacher, it is absolutely characteristic of Washington, and it is equally characteristic of him who since his time most nearly resembled him.

However this was, the lad grew up amid the traditions of that greatest of great men, whose life he so manifestly takes as his model, and with whose fame his own fame was to be so closely allied in the minds and hearts of the people of the South.

Like Washington, Robert E. Lee became an orphan at an early age, his father having been mortally injured in an election riot in Baltimore,

* A Japanese officer, a military attaché at Washington, related to the writer that when he was a boy in a hill-town of Japan, where his father was an officer of one of the old Samurai, his mother told him the story of George Washington and the cherry-tree and tried to impress on him the lessons of truth.

and dying when the lad was only eleven years old, and, like Washington, Lee was brought up by a devoted mother, the gentle and pious Anne Carter, of Shirley, a representative, as already stated, of one of the old families of "Tidewater" Virginia, and a descendant of Robert Carter, known as "King Carter," equally because of his great possessions, his dominant character, and his high position in the colony. Through his mother, as through his father, Lee was related to most of the families of distinction in the Old Dominion, and, by at least one strain of blood, to Washington himself.

Early in Lee's life his father and mother moved from Stratford to Alexandria, one of the two or three Virginia towns that were homes of the gentry, and his boyhood was passed in the old town that was redolent of the memory of Washington. He worshipped in old Christ Church, the same church in which Washington had been a pewholder, and he was a frequent visitor both at the noble mansion on the banks of the Potomac where the Father of his Country had made his home and at that one where lived the Custises, the descendants and representatives of his adopted son, which was to become Lee's own home in the future.

Sprung from such stock and nurtured on such traditions, the lad soon gave evidence of the character that was to place him next to his model. Little is recorded of his childhood beyond the fact of his devotion to his mother and his sisters, and his attention to his duties. Both of his older brothers were very clever, and it is possible that the sturdy Robert was overshadowed by them. "Robert, who was always good," wrote his father of him from the West Indies, where he had gone hoping to restore his health after his injury, "will be confirmed in his happy turn of mind by his ever-watchful and affectionate mother." This prophecy was amply fulfilled. It is recorded that "his mother taught him in his childhood to practice self-denial and self-control, as well as the strictest economy in all financial concerns." To his mother he was ever a dutiful and devoted son, and we have a glimpse of him, none the less interesting and significant because it is casual, leaving his playfellows at their sport to go and take his invalid mother driving in the old family carriage, where he was careful to fasten the curtains and close up the cracks with newspapers to keep the draughts from her, and using all his powers to entertain and divert her. The ties between them were ever peculiarly close, and more than

one of his cousins have recorded that what impressed them most in their youth was "Robert's devotion to his mother." "You have been both son and daughter to me," wrote his mother in her loneliness, after he had left home for West Point. "The other boys used to drink from the glasses of the gentlemen," said one of the family; "but Robert never would join them. He was different."

A light is thrown on his character at this time in a pleasant reference to his boyhood made by himself long afterward, in writing of his youngest son, then a lad, who was going to the Virginia Springs as escort to his mother and sister. "A young gentleman," he says, "who has read Virgil must surely be competent to take care of two ladies; for before I had advanced that far I was my mother's outdoor agent and confidential messenger." * He might readily have said more; for it is related that he was known from his boyhood for his devoted attention to his mother, and that "in her last illness he mixed every dose of medicine which she took," and nursed her both night and day.

* Letter of June 25, 1857.

## II

### FIRST SERVICE

YOUNG Lee selected at an early age the military profession, which had given his father and his great prototype their fame. During his early boyhood occurred the capture of Washington city and the destruction of the Capitol and the White House by the British troops, and it has been suggested that this may have turned his mind toward the army. But this was not needed. It was the profession to which all young men of spirit turned. It was in the blood. And young Lee was the son of him of whom General Charles Lee, himself an accomplished soldier, had said, that "he seemed to have come a soldier from his mother's womb," a bit of characterization which this soldier's distinguished son was to quote with filial satisfaction when, after he himself had become possibly the most famous soldier of his time, he wrote his father's biography. He was, wrote one of his cousins, "most anxious to go to West Point, both to relieve his mother and to have a military education." He had gone to

school at the Alexandria Academy to a Mr. Leary, and with a view to preparing himself for West Point he now went for a time to the school of a well-known teacher, Mr. Hallowell. Here, according to his old master, he was noted for his attention to his duties and his perfect recitations. "His specialty," adds the old teacher, "was finishing up," and he records that even the diagrams in conic sections which he drew on a slate were as carefully drawn and finished as if he had expected them to be engraved. At the proper time, 1825, when he was eighteen years of age, he was entered as a cadet among Virginia's representatives at the military academy of the country, having, it is said, received his appointment through Andrew Jackson, then a senator from Tennessee, to whom he applied in person. And there is a tradition that the hero of New Orleans was much impressed at the interview between them, with the frank and sturdy youth who applied for the appointment. At the academy, as in the case of young Bonaparte, those soldierly qualities which were to bring him later so great a measure of fame were apparent from the first; and he bore off the highest honor that a cadet can secure—the coveted cadet-adjutancy of the corps. Here, too, he gave evidence of the char-

acter that was to prove his most distinguished attribute, and he graduated second in his class of forty-six, but with the extraordinary distinction of not having received a demerit. Thus early his solid character manifested itself. "Even at West Point," says Holcombe, "the solid and lofty qualities of the young cadet were remarked on as bearing a resemblance to those of Washington."

The impress of his character was already becoming stamped upon his countenance. One who knew him about this time records that as she observed his face in repose while he read to the assembled family circle, or sat in church, the reflection crossed her mind that he looked more like a great man than any one she had ever seen.

Among his classmates and fellow students at West Point were many of those men whom he was afterward to serve with or against in the great Civil War, and doubtless a part of his extraordinary success in that Homeric contest was due to the accurate gauge which he formed, in his youth or a little later in Mexico, of their abilities and character. Indeed, as may be shown, this was made almost plainly manifest in his dealings in at least three great campaigns of the war: that in which he confronted the over-prudent

McClellan and defeated him, and those in which he balked and routed the vainglorious Pope and Hooker.

Here is a picture of him at this time from the pen of one who knew and loved him all his life, and had cause to know and love him as a true friend and faithful comrade—his old classmate and comrade-in-arms, Joseph E. Johnston. They had, as he states, entered the military academy together as classmates, and formed there a friendship never impaired, a friendship that was hereditary, as Johnston's father had served under Lee's father in the celebrated Lee Legion during the Revolutionary War.

"We had," says General Johnston, "the same intimate associates, who thought as I did, that no other youth or man so united the qualities that win warm friendship and command high respect. For he was full of sympathy and kindness, genial and fond of gay conversation, and even of fun, while his correctness of demeanor and attention to all duties, personal and official, and a dignity as much a part of himself as the elegance of his person, gave him a superiority that every one acknowledged in his heart. He was the only one of all the men I have known that could laugh at the faults and follies of his friends

in such a manner as to make them ashamed, without touching their affection for him, and to confirm their respect and sense of his superiority." He mentions, as an instance of the depth of his sympathy, an occurrence which took place the morning after a battle in Mexico, in which he had lost a cherished young relative. Lee, meeting him and seeing the grief in his face, burst into tears and soothed him with a sympathy as tender, declared the veteran long years after, "as his lovely wife would have done."

Small wonder that the soldiers who followed Lee faced death with a devotion that was wellnigh without a parallel.

Still influenced in part, perhaps, by his worship for his great hero, the young officer chose as the partner of his life his old playmate, Miss Mary Parke Custis, the granddaughter of Washington's stepson, the surviving representative of Washington. It was an early love affair, and, as such usually resulted in Virginia, proved one of the happiest of marriages. The marriage ceremony took place in the old drawing-room at Arlington, on the 30th of June, 1831, and was performed by the Rev. Dr. William Meade, afterward bishop of Virginia. Mrs. Lee was the daughter and heiress of George W. Parke Custis, while Lieutenant Lee

General Robert E. Lee's home at Arlington, Virginia.

From a photograph, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood.

was poor; but such was her pride in her husband, and her sense of what was his due, that on her marriage to him she determined to live on her husband's income as a lieutenant, and for some time she thus lived.* It was a fitting training for the hardships she was called on to face, when her husband, as commander-in-chief of the Confederate armies, deemed himself happy to be able to send her one nearly dried-up lemon. Their domestic life was one of ideal devotion and happiness. Should we seek through all the annals of time for an illustration of the best that exists in family life, we need not go further to find the perfection and refinement of elegance and of purity than that stately mansion, the home of Lee, which from the wooded heights of Arlington looks down upon the city of Washington, and has by a strange fate become the last resting-place of many of those whose chief renown has been that they fought bravely against Lee. Seven children were born to him, all of whom grew up, and two of whom, like their father, adopted the profession of arms, and rose to the distinguished rank of major-general in the Confederate army.

With the distinction of such a high graduation

*This fact was stated to the writer by the wife of General William N. Pendleton, Mrs. Lee's close neighbor and friend.

as his, young Lee was, of course, assigned to the Engineers, that corps of intellectual aristocracy from which came, with the notable exceptions of Grant and Jackson, nearly all the officers who attained high rank during the war. His first service was in Virginia, where he was engaged on sea-coast defences, an experience which was to bear rich fruit later on when he was called to construct the coast defences of the Carolinas, and rendered them impregnable against attack by sea. He was stationed at Fortress Monroe when occurred in a neighboring county the bloody negro uprising known as the "Nat Turner Rebellion," which thrilled Virginia as thirty years later thrilled her the yet more perilous "John Brown Raid," which Lee was sent to quell, and quelled. Lee's letters to his wife touching this episode, while self-contained, as was his wont, show the deep gravity with which he regarded this ferocious outbreak. Doubtless it also bore its part in bringing his mind to its definite conclusions against slavery, and his conviction that the presence of the colored race was an incalculable misfortune to a State. In 1834 he was assigned to service in Washington, as assistant to the chief engineer of the army. He was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant in 1836, and in 1838 was promoted to the rank of

captain. During this service he resided at Arlington, and took his mid-day meal at a boarding-house kept by a Mrs. Ulrich, on the site of Riggs's Hotel, which was so popular with the army officers that it was known as "The Mess." Here he met many of the leading public men of the day, on all of whom he made a deep impression. "No one was ever jealous of him," records one of his old comrades, Colonel McComb; "all delighted to do him honor."

His early manhood was devoted with unremitting care to his profession, wherein he made, while still a young man, a reputation for ability of so high an order, and for such devotion to duty, that when the Mississippi, owing to a gradual change in its banks, threatened the city of St. Louis, General Scott, having been appealed to to lend his aid to prevent so dire a calamity, said he knew of but one man who was equal to the task, Brevet Captain Lee. "He is young," he wrote, "but if the work can be done, he can do it." The city government, it is said, impatient at the young engineer's methodical way, withdrew the appropriation for the work; but he went on quietly, with the comment: "They can do as they like with their own, but I was sent here to do certain work, and I shall do it." And he did

it. Feeling in the city ran high, riots broke out, and it is said that cannon were placed in position to fire on his working force; but he kept calmly on to the end. The work he wrought there stands to-day—the bulwark of the great city which has so recently invited America and the nations of the world within her gates. His service in 1837 in surveying the upper Mississippi and opening it so as to render it navigable is not generally known; yet it provided a clear water-way for the great region of the North-west, and opened it for the immigration which has since made it one of the most important sections of the country. And Lee's recommendations led to the great conception of the present system of improvement of internal water-ways, and his method was the forerunner of the Eads system of jetties, by which the Mississippi River has been preserved as the midland water-way of the nation.

Referring to this period, one of his old comrades, who later served against him, General Meigs, says of him: "He was a man then in the vigor of youthful strength, with a noble and commanding presence, and an admirable, graceful, and athletic figure. He was one with whom nobody ever wished or ventured to take a liberty, though kind and generous to his subordinates, admired

of all women, and respected of all men. He was the model of a soldier and the beau ideal of a Christian man." Such is the picture of Robert E. Lee at the age of thirty, drawn by one who was arrayed against him in the fierce 'sixties, but who honored him throughout all.

In 1842 Lee was assigned to duty at Fort Hamilton, where for several years he was engaged in improving the defences of New York harbor. Two years later he was appointed on the Board of Visitors of the United States Military Academy, and his efficient services thereon prepared him for the position of superintendent of the Academy later on.

The Mexican War was the training ground of most of those who fought with distinction in the later and more terrible strife of the Civil War, and many of the greatest campaigns and fiercest battles of that war were planned and fought with a science learned upon the pampas and amid the mountains of Mexico. Lee, Jackson, Davis, Johnston, Beauregard, McClellan, Grant, Thomas, Sumner, all won their spurs in Mexico. During the Mexican War, Lee, starting in as an engineer officer on the staff of General Wool, achieved more renown than any other soldier of his rank, and possibly more than any other officer in the army

of invasion except the commander-in-chief. He became General Scott's chief of staff, and between the two was cemented a friendship which even the Civil War could not destroy.

Without going fully into the details of his distinguished services there, which kept him ever at the crucial point, it may be said that they led General Scott to declare, long afterward, that he was the "very best soldier he ever saw in the field." His scouts and reconnoissances at Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, and Chapultepec brought him the brevets of major at Cerro Gordo, April 18, 1847, of lieutenant-colonel at Contreras and Churubusco, and of colonel at Chapultepec, September 13. His first marked distinction was won by a reconnoissance made at night with a single guide, a Mexican, whom he compelled to serve at the muzzle of the pistol, wherein he ascertained the falsity of a report that Santa Anna's army had crossed the mountains and lay in their front. Their tents, it was said, whitened the mountain side. He galloped forward alone into the hills, and discovered that the white tents were flocks of sheep. This distinction greatly increased that which he had already won by work at Vera Cruz, by which that strategic point, protected, as it was believed, by impregnable defences, was

captured. Here on the landing of General Scott's army on the 9th of March, Lee was placed in charge of the establishment of batteries and other details of the siege, and was "favorably mentioned" by the commanding general for his valuable services. Lee himself related his anxiety for his brother, who commanded a detachment of seamen in the trenches, and his relief at seeing his white teeth shining through the smoke. But this, as notable as it was, was as far excelled by his services at Cerro Gordo as that was in turn by his work at Contreras. At Cerro Gordo, where Santa Anna with 13,000 troops and 42 guns, posted in a pass, barred the way in an apparently impregnable position, Lee discovered a mountain pass, and having in person led Twigg's division to the point for assault in front, and having worked all night posting batteries, at dawn next morning led Riley's brigade up the mountains in the turning movement, which forced Santa Anna from his stronghold. At Contreras again he showed the divinely given endowments on which his future fame was to rest.

At Contreras the army of invasion found itself in danger of being balked almost at the gates of the capital, and Lee's ability shone forth even more brilliantly than at Cerro Gordo. The de-

fences of the city of Mexico on the eastward appeared impregnable, while an attack from the south, where the approach was by nature of the ground less difficult, was rendered apparently almost as impossible by powerful batteries constructed at San Antonio Hill, commanding the only avenue of approach—the road which wound between Lake Chalco, with its deep morass on one side and impassable lava beds on the other. Lee, by careful reconnoissance, discovered a mule-trail over the Pedregal, as this wild and broken tract of petrified lava was termed, and this trail having been opened sufficiently to admit of the passage of troops, though with difficulty and danger, he conducted over it the commands of Generals Pillow and Worth, and the village of Contreras was seized and held till night against all assaults of the enemy. The position of the American troops, however, was one of extreme peril, as it was known that heavy reinforcements were being rushed forward by the Mexicans, and at a council of war it was decided to advance before dawn rather than await attack from the Mexican forces. It became necessary to inform General Scott of the situation, and Captain Lee volunteered for the perilous service. He accordingly set out in the darkness and alone, and in the

midst of a furious tropical storm he made his way back across the lava beds infested by bands of Mexicans, advised the commander-in-chief of the proposed movement, and having secured his co-operation, returned across the Pedregal in time to assist in the assault, which forced the Mexicans to abandon their position and opened the way to Churubusco, Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec, and finally led to the occupation of the capital and the close of the war. General Scott, in his report, stated that seven officers had been sent by him on this reconnoissance, but all returned, and that Lee was the only man who got through.

This act of Lee's was, declared Scott, "the greatest feat of physical and moral courage performed by any individual, to my knowledge, pending the campaign."

The story is well known of his devotion to duty while in Mexico. On one occasion, after the capture of the city, the officers gave a banquet, and when Lee did not appear, Magruder sought him, and found him hard at work on a map which he conceived it his duty to prepare without delay. If he was, as Scott declared him, "as daring as laborious," also he was "as laborious as daring."

The "gallantry and good conduct," the "in-

valuable services," "the intrepid coolness and gallantry of Captain Lee of the Engineers," of "Captain Lee, so constantly distinguished," are in all the despatches of all the battles of the war, and Lee came out of this war with such a reputation for ability that his old commander, Scott, declared to General Preston, that he was "the greatest living soldier in America." Indeed, Scott, with prescient vision, declared his opinion that he was "the greatest soldier now living in the world." "If I were on my death-bed tomorrow," he said to General Preston, long before the breaking out of the war, "and the President of the United States should tell me that a great battle was to be fought for the liberty or slavery of the country, and asked my judgment as to the ability of a commander, I would say with my dying breath, 'Let it be Robert E. Lee.'"

To Reverdy Johnson, Scott said that his success in Mexico "was largely due to the skill, valor, and undaunted energy of Robert E. Lee." Lee himself, however, declared that it was General Scott's stout heart and military skill which overcame all obstacles, and, while others croaked, pushed the campaign through to final success. The delay in negotiating the treaty of peace after the fall of the city of Mexico seems to have irked

him, and he writes privately: "I might make a rough diplomatist, but a tolerable quick one." Soon after the capture of the Mexican capital, he, with characteristic modesty, wrote the following letter in reply to a letter from his wife's father, Mr. Custis, who had shown concern lest he should not be properly advanced on the close of hostilities.

City of Mexico, *April* 8, 1848.

. . . I hope my friends will give themselves no annoyance on my account, or any concern about the distribution of favors. I know how those things are awarded at Washington, and how the President will be besieged by clamorous claimants. I do not wish to be among them. Such as he can conscientiously bestow, I shall gratefully receive, and have no doubt that those will exceed my deserts. . . .

Certain it is that Lee came out of the Mexican War with more distinction than any other subordinate officer. And it was the opinion of his comrades that "all the compliments won by him were deserved." That "he was active, untiring, skilful, courageous, and of good judgment" is the verdict they gave. One other characteristic of his is mentioned by an old comrade. "He was conspicuous . . . for never having uttered a word among his most intimate associates that might

not have been spoken in the presence of the most refined woman."

The scope of this volume does not admit of a detailed account of the years that intervened between the close of the Mexican War and the outbreak of the great Civil War, although it was in these years of devotion to duty, often in the form of dull routine, that Lee's powers reached their maturity.

During the period following the Mexican War Lee was engaged for a time in constructing the defences of Baltimore. Then he was, in 1852, assigned to duty as superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he was to come to know and gauge many of the young officers who, a decade later, fought under or against him. Three years later he was assigned to active duty on the south-western frontier as lieutenant-colonel of one of the two regiments of cavalry which Mr. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, had organized on the recommendation of General Scott, and made a separate branch of the service.* To the Second Cavalry was assigned the duty of guarding the south-western

* Of these regiments E. V. Sumner was colonel of the first and Joseph E. Johnston was lieutentant-colonel, and Albert Sidney Johnston was colonel of the second, with Lee as his lieutenant-colonel.

frontier and preventing or punishing the depredations of the Indians, and Lee applied himself to this work with characteristic zeal and patience. He speaks of the Indians' expeditions as "a cloak to cover all their thefts and murders," and thinks "the poor creatures" are "not worth the trouble they give to man and horse." He soon rose to the rank of colonel of cavalry, a position which a great critic of war has asserted to be the best of all training-schools for a great captain, and he held this rank when, having been brought to Washington to revise the tactics of the army, he was unexpectedly called on in the summer of 1859 to take charge of the force of marines sent to Harper's Ferry to capture John Brown and his followers in their crazy and murderous invasion of Virginia, with the design of starting a servile war which should lead to the negroes achieving their emancipation. This duty he performed promptly and efficiently. It was a delicate position. Virginia was in a tumult of rage and excitement over the bold attempt to arouse within her borders a servile insurrection, which meant putting her women and children to the sword. It was an armed invasion, and the respective claims of authority had to be recognized. There was grave danger of a conflict of authority be-

tween the State and the Federal powers. He met the situation with promptitude and wisdom. The murderous fanatic, Brown, was captured after a brief resistance, and was duly tried and executed by the civil authorities. It is an interesting fact that Lee's aide on this occasion was a young lieutenant, J. E. B. Stuart, who a few years later was to become his cavalry commander and achieve at a bound a world-wide fame. It is also an interesting fact that at this time he had one of his aides make a map for him of Harper's Ferry and the Maryland Heights opposite.

Though a strict disciplinarian, he was greatly admired by his men. Long afterward, when he was a defeated general on parole, without means, his every act and word watched by enemies thirsting for his blood, one of the men he had commanded in the Second Cavalry, but who had fought in the Union army throughout the war, called at his house in Richmond with a basket of provisions for his old commander, having heard that he was in want, and when he saw him he seized him in his arms and kissed him. Of this regiment, Long speaks with pride: "As a proof of the superiority of its officers," he states, "it may be said that this regiment turned out during the war more distinguished men than any other

regiment in the army. Besides Johnston, Lee, Hardee, and Thomas, it furnished Van Dorn, Palmer, Hood, Fitz Lee, Stoneman, Kirby Smith, Field, and others."

A light is thrown on his character in the letters he wrote about and to his children during his long absences from home on duty in Mexico and in the West. And it is one of the pathetic elements in the history of this loving and tender father that, with a nature which would have revelled in the joys of domestic life, he should have been called by duty to spend so large a part of his time away from home that on his return he did not know his own child.

In October, 1857, on the death of his wife's father, he came to Arlington to settle up his estate, and it is said that on his next visit to Virginia, about the time of the John Brown Raid, he was enjoying the second leave of absence that he had had since joining the service, over thirty years before. It was a delightful respite from the exactions of army life on the frontier. He was ever devoted to children, and amid the most tragic scenes of his eventful life his love for them speaks from his letters. Writing to his wife from St. Louis in 1837, when he was engaged in engineering work for the government, he speaks with deep

feeling of the sadness he felt at being separated from his family, and of his anxiety about the training of his little son. "Our dear little boy," he says, "seems to have among his friends the reputation of being hard to manage—a distinction not at all desirable, as it indicates self-will and obstinacy. Perhaps these are qualities which he really possesses, and he may have a better right to them than I am willing to acknowledge; but it is our duty, if possible, to counteract them, and assist him to bring them under his control. I have endeavored, in my intercourse with him, to require nothing but what was, in my opinion, necessary or proper, and to explain to him temperately its propriety, and at a time when he could listen to my arguments, and not at the moment of his being vexed and his little faculties warped by passion. I have also tried to show him that I was firm in my demands and constant in their enforcement, and that he must comply with them, and I let him see that I look to their execution in order to relieve him as much as possible from the temptation to break them."

Wise words from a father, and the significant thing was that they represented his conduct throughout his life. He was the personification of reasonableness. Small wonder that his young-

est son, in his memoir of his father, recorded that among his first impressions was the recognition of a difference between his father and other persons, and a knowledge that he had to be obeyed. It was an impression which was later made on all who came in contact with him. A glimpse of him is given in an incident which he related of a walk in the snow with his eldest son when the latter was a child. The little boy had fallen behind, and his father, looking back over his shoulder, found him trying to follow his stride and place his feet precisely in his footprints. "When I saw this," he said, "I felt that it behooved me to walk very straight, when this fellow is already following in my tracks." "To be alone in a crowd is to be very solitary," he writes to his wife, in another letter. "In the woods I feel sympathy with the trees and birds, in whose company I take delight; but experience no interest in a strange crowd." A touch in one of his letters to an old friend and classmate, then Lieutenant, afterward Lieutenant-General, Joseph E. Johnston, gives a glimpse of his love for children, and also of that of another old friend: "He complains bitterly of his present waste of life, looks thin and dispirited, and is acquainted with the cry of every child in Iowa."

His son and namesake, in his "Recollections" of his father, makes mention of many little instances of his love of and care for animals, and the same love of and care for animals constantly shine from his letters.

At one time he picks up a dog lost and swimming wildly in "the Narrows," and cared for it through life; at another he takes a long, roundabout journey by steamer for the sake of his horse; at another he writes: "Cannot you cure poor 'Spec'?" (his dog). "Cheer him up! take him to walk with you—tell the children to cheer him up." In fact, his love for animals, like his love for children, was a marked characteristic throughout his life, and long after the war he took the trouble to write a description of his horse "Traveller," which none but a true lover of horses could have written.

On his return from Mexico, after an absence so long that he failed to recognize his own child whom he had left a babe in arms, he was, like Ulysses, first recognized by his faithful dog.*

His thoughts were constantly with his children —even amid the most arduous duties and the most perilous scenes his mind reverted to them. His letters from Mexico were full of them. On

* "Recollections and Letters of General Lee," by R. E. Lee.

Christmas Eve he, in his imagination, filled their stockings, as on another occasion, in lieu of his own children, from whom he was far distant, he acted Santa Claus and bought presents for all the children in the post. And it has been noted "how little of war and how much of Christian feeling and domestic affection" his home letters contain. He ever kept in touch with his children, writing them of the interesting scenes through which he passed. To his eldest son, then a schoolboy, later a gallant and efficient soldier of high rank, he wrote, just after the battle of Cerro Gordo,* how in the battle he had wondered, while the musket balls and grape were whistling over his head in a perfect shower, where he could have put him, if with him, to be safe. Indeed, all through his life children had a charm for him, known only to the starved heart of a father exiled from his own fireside and little ones. To the day of his death the entrance of a child was a signal for the dignified soldier to unbend, and among his most cherished companions in his retirement, when he was, perhaps, the most noted captain in the world, were the little sun-bonneted daughters of the professors of the college of which he was the president.

* Letter of April 25, 1847.

His two elder sons had both entered the military profession, which their father held in the highest honor, and the letters he wrote them illustrated not only the charming relation that existed between father and sons, but the lofty ideal on which he ever modelled his own life and desired that they should model theirs. To his oldest son, then a cadet at West Point, he writes from Arlington (April 5, 1852), as he was on the point of leaving for New Mexico to see that his "fine old regiment," which had been "ordered to that distant region," was "properly cared for": ". . . Your letters breathe a true spirit of frankness; they have given myself and your mother great pleasure. You must study to be frank with the world. Frankness is the child of honesty and courage. . . . Never do a wrong thing to make a friend or to keep one. . . . Above all, do not appear to others what you are not. . . . In regard to duty, let me in conclusion of this hasty letter inform you that nearly a hundred years ago there was a day of remarkable darkness and gloom, still known as the dark day—a day when the light of the sun was slowly extinguished, as if by an eclipse. The legislature of Connecticut was in session, and as its members saw the unexpected and unaccountable darkness coming on,

they shared the general awe and terror. It was supposed by many that the last day—the day of judgment—had come. Some one in consternation of the hour moved an adjournment. Then there arose an old Pilgrim legislator, Davenport of Stamford, and said that if the last day had come he desired to be found at his place doing his duty, and therefore moved that candles be brought in so that the House could proceed with its duty. There was quietness in that man's mind, the quietness of heavenly wisdom and inflexible willingness to obey present duty. Duty, then, is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things, like the old Puritan. You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less. Never let me or your mother wear one gray hair for lack of duty on your part." *

Such, in brief, was Colonel Robert E. Lee, when at the age of fifty-four he found the storm of Civil War about to break on the country.

* It is said that this letter as a whole was made up by a clever newspaper man out of parts of different letters by Lee.

## III

### THE CHOICE OF HERCULES

WHEN the war came Lee had to face the most momentous question that ever confronted a soldier. The government of the United States and his own State, which was later to form a part of a new national government, were about to be arrayed in arms against each other. The former was preparing to invade his native State, to coerce by arms the seceded States. He had to decide between allegiance to the general government, of which hitherto Virginia had formed a constituent part, whose commission he had borne, whose honors had been conferred on him, and under whose flag he had won high distinction, and allegiance to his native State, which, on being called on to take part against the South or be herself invaded, now in the exercise of her constitutional right seceded from the Union.

The John Brown Raid with its aim, the heading of a servile insurrection throughout the South, backed as it was by blind enthusiasts at the North, affected profoundly all thinking men at

the South. Had it proved successful, the horrors of San Domingo would have been multiplied a thousandfold, and have swept over the South in a deluge of blood. The South was enraged by this effort to arouse a slave insurrection; but the wild sympathy expressed at the North with its murderous leader gave it a shock from which it never recovered. Lee had no illusions respecting slavery. He saw its evils with an eye as clear as Wendell Phillips's. He set forth his views in favor of emancipation in as positive terms as Lincoln ever employed. He set free before the war all the slaves he owned in his own right,* and, by a singular coincidence, within a week after the emancipation proclamation he manumitted all the negroes received by him from the Custis estate, having previous to that time made his arrangements to do so in conformity with the provisions of Mr. Custis's will.

In addition to his attitude toward slavery, as shown in his letting his own slaves go long before the war, his views on the subject occasionally appear in his letters. "I have always observed,"

* The authority for this is a letter from General G. W. C. Lee, in the writer's possession, in which he states that General Lee "let his slaves go," and one or more of them went to Liberia. The term as representing the liberation of slaves is as old as the mission of Moses.

he writes, "that wherever you find the negro, you see everything going down around him, and wherever you find the white man, you see everything around him improving." And again: "In this enlightened age there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and a political evil in any country."

But he held the views that many if not most of the old Virginians held: he esteemed "the relation of master and slave, controlled by humane laws and influenced by Christianity and an enlightened public sentiment, as the best that can exist between the white and black races while intermingled, as at present, in this country."

He stated after the war that "the best men of the South have long desired to do away with the institution, and were quite willing to see it abolished. But with them in relation to this subject the question has ever been: What will you do with the freed people? That is the serious question to-day. Unless some humane course, based upon wisdom and Christian principles, is adopted, you do them a great injustice in setting them free."

Most men of open minds have long passed the point when we should deny to any honorable man the right to make the election which Lee was

called on to make on the secession of Virginia, as his conscience dictated. But with most of us sympathy and affection go to the man who chose the weaker side. This choice Lee deliberately made. Who knows what agony that accomplished soldier and noble gentleman went through during those long weeks, when the sword was suspended, and he with unblinded vision foresaw that it must fall! He was a devoted Union man. His letters all show the depth of his feeling for the Union his forefathers had contributed so largely to make. To some men the decision might have been made more difficult by the lure that was suddenly held out to him. But not so with Lee. The only question with him was what was his duty.

The President of the United States tendered to him the command of the armies of the Union about to take the field. This has long been regarded by those who know as an established fact; but it has become the custom of late among a certain class to deny the fact on the principle, perhaps, that an untruth well stuck to may possibly supplant the truth. Of the fact that he was offered the command of the armies of the United States there is, however, abundant proof, outside of General Lee's own statement to Sen-

ator Reverdy Johnson, were more proof needed. The Hon. Montgomery Blair published the fact as stated by his father, the Hon. Francis P. Blair, that he had been sent by Mr. Lincoln to Colonel Lee with the offer of the command, and long afterward the Hon. Simon Cameron, formerly Secretary of War in Mr. Lincoln's cabinet, in a published interview, frankly admitted the fact. "It is true," he says, "that General Robert E. Lee was tendered the command of the Union army. It was the wish of Mr. Lincoln's administration that as many as possible of the Southern officers then in the regular army should remain true to the nation which had educated them. Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston were then the leading Southern soldiers. . . . In the moves and counter moves in the game of war and peace then going on, Francis P. Blair, Sr., was a prominent figure. The tender of the command of the United States forces was made to General Lee through him. Mr. Blair came to me expressing the opinion that General Lee could be held to our cause by the offer of the chief command of our forces. I authorized Mr. Blair to make the offer. . . ." *

But the matter is set at rest by a letter from

* *New York Herald*, cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 130.

General Lee—his letter of February 25, 1868, to Hon. Reverdy Johnson—in which he states that he had a conversation with Mr. Francis Preston Blair, at his invitation, and, as he understood, at the instance of President Lincoln. "After listening to his remarks," he says, "I declined the offer he made me to take command of the army that was to be brought into the field, stating as candidly and as courteously as I could that, though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could take no part in an invasion of the Southern States. I went directly from the interview with Mr. Blair to the office of General Scott, told him of the proposition that had been made me and my decision." * Indeed, it was this offer which possibly hastened his decision. Events were moving with startling and unexampled celerity. On April 12 Fort Sumter was fired on; on April 13 President Lincoln called on the unseceded States for troops; on April 17 Virginia, hitherto stanch for the Union, seceded. This action, in Lee's judgment, concluded her sons.

Three days later, on April 20, he resigned his commission in the United States army, declaring that he never wished to draw his sword again

* See also Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee," p. 128.

save in defence of his native State. Even then he "hoped that peace might be preserved and some way found to save the country from the calamities of war."

So much we have from his own lips, and that is proof enough for those who know his character.

This action of Lee's at the outbreak of the war, in resigning from the army of the United States, and later in assuming the command, first of the Virginian forces and afterward of the Confederate forces, used, during the period of passion covered by the war and the bitter years which followed, to be made the basis of a criticism whose rancor bore an almost precise relation to the degree of security which had been sought by the assailant during the hour of danger. The men who fought the battles of the Union said little upon the subject. They knew, for the most part, the lofty feeling which animated the breasts which opposed them, and paid it the tribute of unfeigned respect. The conduct of Grant and of his officers at Appomattox, with a single exception, was such as to reflect unending credit on them as men of honor and generosity. The charge of treason was mainly left to those who, having risked nothing on the field of honor, were fain later, when all danger was past, to achieve

a reputation for patriotism by the unappeasable fury of their cries for revenge. To these, the vultures of the race, may be added an element, sincere and not well informed, who, more than half wishing to avail themselves of Lee's transcendent character, have found his action in this crisis a stumbling-block in their way. Having been reared solely upon the doctrine of Federalism, and taught all their lives that the officers of the army of the Union had received their education at West Point at the hands of the National Government, and were guilty of something like treason, or, as it used to be put, treachery, in giving up their commands in the Union army and bearing arms for their States against the United States, they find it difficult to accept the plainest facts. These are the bigots of politics.

As the statement is absolutely unfounded, and as the matter goes to the basis of character, it is well to point these latter to the facts which disprove wholly and forever the premises on which they have based their erroneous conclusion.

It should be remembered at the outset that the action of every man must be considered in relation to the conditions from which that action springs, and amid which it had its being. The most fallacious method of considering history is

that which excludes contemporary conditions and undertakes to judge it by the present, the two eras being often far more different than would be indicated by the mere passage of time.

At the time when Lee and his brother officers received their education at the Military Academy, they were sent there as State cadets, and the expense of their education was borne at last by the several States, which, there being at that time no high tariff and no internal-revenue taxation to maintain the National Government, made a yet more direct contribution than since the war to the government for its expenses. In recognition of this fact, and as compensation for the contribution by the States, each representative of a State had the right to send a cadet to each academy. Virginia had been peculiarly instrumental in creating the Union. She had taken a foremost and decisive part in the Revolution for those rights on which the Constitution was based, and subsequently in the adoption of the Constitution. She had led alike in the field and in the council chamber. Without her no Union would have been formed, and without her no Union could have been preserved during the early decades of its existence. To make the Union possible she had ceded her vast north-west territory, to which

she had the double claim that it was first embraced in her charter and later was conquered by her sons, led by George Rogers Clark. It may be safely predicated that had any one imagined that entering into the Union would have given the Union government the right to demand service against his State, there would never have been a Union.

There had long been two different schools of governmental thought in the country, the one representing the Federalist party and the other representing the Republican or Democratic party. They had their rise in the very inception of the National Government. Their teachings had divided the country from the first. Originally the chief agitation against the Federal Government had been at the North, and while the parties were not demarked by any sectional lines, for the most part, the body of the Federalist party were at the period of the outbreak of war, owing to certain conditions connected with the institution of slavery, and to various advantages accruing to the Northern States, as manufacturing States, at the North, while the body of the States' Rights party were at the South. Not only were the powers of the greatest statesmen and debaters in the country continually exercised upon this question, as, for example, in the debates in which

Clay, Webster, Hayne, and Calhoun took part on the floor of the Senate, but the teachings in the great institutions of learning were divided.* It was a question on which not only men divided, but populations; and the populations of the North and the South had largely exchanged places regarding it.

But Lee had from his boyhood been reared in the Southern school of States' Rights as interpreted by the conservative statesmen of Virginia. His gallant and distinguished father had been three times governor of Virginia, and while heartily advocating in the Virginia convention the ratification of the Constitution of the United States, favored the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798–99, drawn by Mr. Madison and Mr. Jefferson, which were based upon the States' Rights doctrine. He said in debate: "Virginia is my country: her will I obey, however lamentable the fate to which it may subject me."

He wrote to Mr. Madison in January, 1792, a letter in which he said: "No consideration on earth could induce me to act a part, however gratifying to me, which could be construed into disregard of, or faithlessness to, this commonwealth."

* A brief and simple statement of the position of the two sides may be found in Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, chap. I.

Such was the teaching under which Robert E. Lee had been reared. One knows little of Virginia who does not know with what passionate esteem the traditions and opinions of a father were cherished by a son. Political views were as much inherited as religious tenets.

The doctrine that made it treason for a State to secede is of modern origin. A question might exist as to the propriety or wisdom of secession; but it was novel to question its right, and when it had seceded few men questioned that it carried with it the allegiance of its citizens.

As a matter of fact, at the time that young Lee was attending the Military Academy at West Point, the text-books, such as "Rawle's View of the Constitution," which were used there, taught with great distinctness the absolute right of a State to secede, and the primary duty of every man to his native State.* "It depends on the

* This has been ably and conclusively shown by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, of Massachusetts, in his admirable address on "Constitutional Ethics," and in his memorial address on the life and character of Robert E. Lee, delivered at Washington and Lee University on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of General Lee's birth. His distinguished grandfather, John Quincy Adams, who had been President of the United States, had enunciated the doctrine of secession clearly, declaring that it would be better for the States to "part in friendship from each other than to be held together by constraint" and "to form again a more perfect Union by dissolving that which could not bind." (Speech of John Quincy Adams, April 30, 1839.)

State itself," declares this authority then taught at West Point, "to retain or abolish the principle of representation, because it depends on itself whether it will continue a member of the Union. To deny this right would be inconsistent with the principle on which all our political systems are founded, which is, that the people have, in all cases, a right to determine how they will be governed. This right must be considered as an ingredient in the composition of the general government, which, though not expressed, was mutually understood, and the doctrine heretofore presented to the reader in regard to the indefeasible nature of personal allegiance is so far qualified in respect to allegiance to the United States." "It was observed that it was competent for a State to make a compact with its citizens, that the reciprocal obligation of protection and allegiance might cease on certain events; and it was further observed that allegiance would necessarily cease on the dissolution of the society to which it was due." This position was that held by the leaders of New England during the first half of the century, and was earnestly advanced by them both at the time of the acquisition of Louisiana and of Texas.

The action of the Hartford convention in threat-

ening secession had blazoned abroad the views of the leaders of New England thought at the time when the Virginians were straining every force to maintain the Union, and John Quincy Adams had presented to Congress (January 23, 1842) a petition from a Massachusetts town (Haverhill), asking the dissolution of the Union, on which a motion had been made by a Virginia member (Mr. Gilmer) to censure him, which had been debated for ten days, Mr. Adams ably defending himself.

As has been stated, however, whatever question existed as to the right of a State to secede, there was no question at the time as to her citizens being bound by her action should she secede. The basic principle of the Anglo-Saxon civilization was the defence of the inner circle against whatever assailed it from the outside, and nowhere was this principle more absolutely established than in Virginia.

In order for those who do not know the facts to understand fully Lee's decision, it should be explained that Virginia did not make war on the Union, but the Union made war on the South and on Virginia. It has usually been accepted as an established fact that the war began by the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Such was not the fact. The bombardment of this key

to the Charleston harbor was not even the first instance of "firing on the flag," as it is usually assumed to have been. Three months before this the United States transport, *Star of the West*, was fired on and driven back as she was proceeding to revictual Sumter.

But prior to this the United States Government had been actually engaged in acts of war against the seceded States. Troops were being levied and equipped and a relief squadron of war had been fitted out and despatched for the avowed purpose of relieving and rendering impregnable the forts commanding Charleston harbor. These were acts of war, recognized as such by all authorities on this subject save those who have held a brief for the Union side in this particular struggle. When Virginia refused to join the secession movement and attempted to intervene as a peacemaker, the only reply she received was a peremptory demand to furnish her quota of troops for the war. Her answer to this was her ordinance of secession and her preparation for defence. But even then she took no hostile steps against the North. She only prepared to defend her borders. Whatever historians have written and others have thought, war was made on her, and the first shot fired by her within her confines or by her orders was in

repelling armed invasion. In such a case her whole people, save those in her mountain region, united under her banner with its noble legend: *Sic semper tyrannis.* In a thoughtful discussion of the action of Virginia at this time, Colonel G. F. R. Henderson, the noted biographer of Stonewall Jackson, says: "There can be no question but that secession was revolution, and revolutions, as has been well said, are not made for the sake of 'greased cartridges.' . . . Secession, in fact, was a protest against mob rule. . . . It is always difficult to analyze the motives of those by whom revolution is provoked; but if a whole people acquiesce, it is a certain proof of the existence of universal apprehension and deep-rooted discontent. This spirit of self-sacrifice which animated the Confederate South has been characteristic of every revolution which has been the expression of a nation's wrongs, but it has never yet accompanied mere factious insurrection. When, in the process of time, the history of secession comes to be viewed with the same freedom from prejudice as the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it will be clear that the fourth great revolution of the English-speaking race differs in no essential characteristic from those that preceded it. . . . In each a great principle was at stake: in

1642, the liberty of the subject; in 1688, the integrity of the Protestant faith; in 1775, taxation only with consent of the taxed; in 1861, the sovereignty of the individual States." *

Whether, then, those who were in the service of the United States at the outbreak of the war were under obligation to remain in her service after their States seceded, or were under obligation to resign and espouse the side of their several States, was a matter for each man to decide according to his conscience, and scores of gallant and high-minded gentlemen thus decided. Of the three hundred and odd graduates of West Point who were from the South, a considerable majority followed their States, and these—men whose character would challenge comparison with the loftiest examples of the human race. That there was an obligation on them to remain and bear arms against their family and people because of the source from which their education came is sheer nonsense. Had it ever been imagined that training at West Point bound a man to serve against his family and people in his native State, there would have been no West Point Military

* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," new impression, I, pp. 93, 94. I have quoted extensively in this volume from this author, feeling that he, as an impartial student of the Civil War and its causes, is an authority to command respect.

Academy. This education was but a simple return for the money contributed by their States to the general government. And Virginia had paid for all she got a hundred times over.

Without undertaking to enter upon anything like a complete discussion of this question of the right and the righteousness of secession, it is necessary to make clear the belief of the Southern people on the outbreak of the war, in order to make clear Lee's point of view and the ground of his action; and this may hardly be done better than by citing the words of one of the leading Northern historians of the war—for the fair-minded presentation in his studies of this subject gave the late John C. Ropes the right to speak upon it with authority. "The attitude then," he says, after a brief historical summary of the steps which had led up to secession, "which the seceding States assumed toward the States which remained in the Union was that of foreign nations, as one by one they adopted their ordinances of secession and withdrew their senators and representatives from Congress. And there can be no reasonable doubt that when, in any State, the ordinance of secession had been adopted, the people of that State—or the great majority of them at least—felt that their allegiance was now

due solely to their State; and even those persons who had strongly and earnestly opposed the secession movement, whether on grounds of policy or on grounds of right, felt themselves none the less bound loyally to serve their State, now that it had seceded.

"All this it is of the greatest importance to know, and continually to bear in mind, if we would understand the attitude of the Southern people during the war. They were not, in their own opinion, *rebels* at all; they were defending their States—that is, the *nations* to which they conceived themselves to belong—from invasion and conquest. The character which this conviction of the Southern people gave to the contest was most noticeable; it is not too much to say that none of the usual features of a rebellion were to be perceived in the South during the war. There was, for instance, nothing in the temper of the South to suggest that the war was carried on for the redress of grievances—as is always the case among a rebellious population. On the contrary, the attitude of the South was from the beginning one of resistance to the uttermost; it was, in fine, the attitude of a nation repelling invasion, dismemberment, conquest. And, we repeat, it is of the first importance that we should

recognize the grounds of this wellnigh universal feeling among the Southern people if we would understand the causes of the unanimity and devotion with which they, for four long years, withstood the armies of the United States."

Having followed this with a presentation of the Northern point of view at that time, Mr. Ropes goes on to show that "the Northern people were very certain that in 1861, at any rate, the United States constituted but one nation," and that the feeling that they were "charged with the important task of preserving intact the great republic of the world, inspired the people of the North with a determination to maintain the integrity of the nation at any cost. The war," he frankly states, "enlisted the patriotic feelings, properly so-called, of both the contending parties. The North was inspired with a lofty determination to be true to the duty of maintaining in all its integrity the great republic of the Western Continent; the South was equally resolute to defend the independence of her several nationalities.

"These differences were irreconcilable. The North could not admit the contention of the South. She denied the right of secession; in her view the seceding States were States in insurrection. The parties were thus from the outset hope-

lessly at variance regarding the very terms of the controversy."

While arguing that "the fact that the unadmissible claims to independence were set up by communities which professed devotion to the institution of slavery—a system repugnant to the enlightenment and humanity of the age—drew to the Union side the moral approval of the great mass of the Northern people," he disposes briefly of the claim so commonly asserted and believed, that the war was waged by the North for the purpose of abolishing slavery in the South, and declares that "that was certainly not the case." The war was prosecuted to put down all resistance to the National Government.

This able historian, having given briefly his view of the causes which led to this unhappy and disastrous war, concludes in these words, in which all fair-minded men must unite: "The courage and endurance displayed by both sides were wonderful indeed; and it is clearly desirable that the sources and springs of so much valor and so much fortitude should be distinctly identified." *

When the great conflict came, the time which tried men's souls, no soul in all the limits of this

* "Story of the Civil War," Ropes, I, pp. 3–9.

broad country was more tried than that lofty soul which had for its home the breast of Robert E. Lee. Every sentiment of affection, ambition, and pride bound him to the Union. A glimpse of his love for and pride in his country may be found in a letter written during his stay in Texas, in 1856. Writing of the national holiday—the Fourth of July—to his wife he says: "Mine was spent, after a march of thirty miles, on one of the branches of the Brazos, under my blanket, elevated on four sticks driven in the ground, as a sunshade. The sun was fiery hot, the atmosphere like a blast from a hot-air furnace, the water salt, still my feelings for my country were as ardent, my faith in her future as true, and my hope for her advancement as unabated as they would have been under better circumstances." * In December, 1860, he writes: "Feeling the aggression of the North, resenting their denial of the equal rights of our citizens to the common territory of the commonwealth, etc., I am not pleased with the course of the 'Cotton States,' as they term themselves. In addition to their selfish, dictatorial bearing, the threats they throw out against the 'Border States,' as they call them, if they will not join them, argues little for the benefit or peace

* Letter of August 4, 1856, cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 80.

of Virginia, should she determine to coalesce with them. While I wish to do what is right, I am unwilling to do what is wrong at the bidding of the South or of the North." And in January following he writes: "As far as I can judge from the papers, we are between a state of anarchy and civil war. May God avert from us both! . . . I see that four States have declared themselves out of the Union. Four more apparently will follow their example. Then if the border States are dragged into the gulf of revolution, one half of the country will be arrayed against the other, and I must try and be patient and wait the end; for I can do nothing to hasten or retard it."

Such was the feeling of this Virginian for the Union, which was to be put aside at the call of duty. He was a Union man, and viewed secession with abhorrence as revolution. Only one thing he viewed with more abhorrence—dishonor.

Writing from Texas of secession in the beginning of 1861, he said: "The South, in my opinion, has been aggrieved by the act of the North. I feel the aggression and am willing to take every proper step for redress. It is the principle I contend for, not individual or private interest. As an American citizen I take great pride in my country, her prosperity and institutions. But I

can anticipate no greater calamity for this country than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, and I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation. I hope, therefore, that all constitutional means will be exhausted before there is a resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution. . . . Still a Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets, and in which strife and civil war are to take the place of brotherly love and kindness, has no charm for me. I shall mourn for my country, and for the welfare and progress of mankind. If the Union is dissolved and the government disrupted, I shall return to my native State and share the miseries of my people, and, save in defence, will draw my sword no more." *

The agony which he endured when the crucial time came may possibly never be known to us. We have an account given by Mrs. Lee of the manner in which he reached his decision. The Rev. Dr. J. William Jones, who knew them both well and was intrusted with many family papers, tells us that "the night his letter of resignation was to be written, he asked to be left alone for

* Letter of January 23, 1861, cited in Jones's "Life and Letters of R. E. Lee," p. 120.

a time, and while he paced the chamber above, and was heard frequently to fall upon his knees and engage in prayer for divine guidance, she waited, and watched, and prayed below. At last he came down, came collected, almost cheerfully, and said: 'Well, Mary, the question is settled. Here is my letter of resignation, and a letter I have written to General Scott.'" All night he had wrestled; but in the morning light had come.* This is the letter:

ARLINGTON, VA., *April* 20, 1861.

*General:* Since my interview with you on the 18th inst., I have felt that I ought not longer to retain my commission in the army. I therefore tender my resignation, which I request you will recommend for acceptance. It would have been presented at once but for the struggle it has cost me to separate myself from a service to which I have devoted the best years of my life and all the ability I possessed. During the whole of that time—more than a quarter of a century—I have experienced nothing but kindness from my superiors, and a most cordial friendship from my comrades. To no one, general, have I been as much indebted as to yourself for uniform kindness and consideration, and it has always been my ardent desire to merit your approbation. I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollections

* Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," p. 132.

of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me.

Save in the defence of my native State, I never desire again to draw my sword. Be pleased to accept my most earnest wishes for the continuance of your happiness and prosperity, and believe me most truly yours,

R. E. Lee.

His wife's family were strongly Union in their sentiments, and the writer has heard that powerful family influences were exerted to prevail on him to adhere to the Union side. "My husband has wept tears of blood," wrote Mrs. Lee to his old commander, Scott, who did him the justice to declare that he knew he acted under a compelling sense of duty.

His letters to his family and to his friends, though self-restrained, as was the habit of the man, show plainly to those who knew his character how stern was the sense of duty under which Lee acted when in his own person he had to meet the question whether he should take part against his native State. Unlike many other officers who knew no home but the post where they were quartered, Lee's home was in Virginia, and to this beautiful home in his most distant and engrossing service his heart had ever yearned.

Lee had no personal interests to subserve connected with the preservation of the institution of slavery; his inclinations and his views all tended the other way. "In this enlightened age," he had already written, "there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil." He had set free the slaves he owned in his own right, and was "in favor of freeing all the slaves in the South, giving to each owner a bond to be the first paid by the Confederacy when its independence should be secured." *

The slaves owned by Mrs. Lee he manumitted in 1862, or in January, 1863. In fact, it is a curious commentary on the motives connected with the war, that while Lee had set his slaves free, Grant is said to have continued in the ownership of slaves until they were emancipated by the government of the United States.†

It was, however, not so much the freeing of

* "The Confederate Cause and Conduct of the War," p. 22; "Official Report of the History Committee, Grand Camp, C. V.," by the late Hunter McGuire, M.D., LL.D., Richmond, Va. See also Lee's letter of December 27, 1856, "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," Jones, p. 82.

† *Ibid.*, p. 23, note, where Mrs. Grant is given as authority for the statement that "these slaves came to him from my father's family; for I lived in the West when I married the general, who was then a lieutenant in the army."

these slaves as the compassion and affection that breathe in his letters about them that testify Lee's character. His care that every one should have his papers, even though he might have gone off to the North; his provision for their wages; his solicitude for the weak and feeble among them, all testify to the feeling that the Virginian master had for his servants.

In February, 1861, the seven Cotton States that had seceded met in convention in Montgomery, Ala., and united themselves in an independent government, which they termed the Confederate States of America. On the 12th of February, negotiations to bring about the withdrawal of the garrisons of the forts in Charleston harbor having failed, and the government being engaged in revictualling and strengthening Fort Sumter, the fort was bombarded and later surrendered. The following day Mr. Lincoln issued a peremptory call to the unseceded States to furnish quotas of 75,000 troops.

The crisis that came rent Virginia. It was known that in the event of war, should Virginia secede, her soil would become the battle-ground. Lee had no illusion as to this, nor had he any illusion as to the fury and duration of the war if it should come. Whatever delusions others

might cherish, he knew the Union thoroughly, and knew the temper and the mettle of the people of both sections. In the dread shadow of war the people of Virginia selected for the great convention which was to decide the question of remaining in the Union or taking part with the other Southern States the most conservative men within her borders. Thus, the Virginia convention was a Whig body with a large majority of stanch Union men, the first Whig body that ever sat in the State.

Throughout its entire duration this great body of representative Virginians resisted all the influences that were brought to bear on them, both from the South and from the people of the State, who, under unreasoning provocation, gradually changed their opinion and began to clamor for secession. Only two weeks before the final act by which she severed her connection with the Union, she, by a two-thirds majority, rejected the idea of secession. A relief squadron sailed for Charleston while negotiations were going on, and preparations for war were being pushed which could only mean one thing. As a last and supreme effort to prevent war, Union men went to Washington to beg Mr. Lincoln to withdraw the garrisons of Sumter and Pickens, and understood

him to say that he had been willing to take it under favorable consideration.* The reply when it came was the imperative call for troops to be furnished by the States. It meant war and the invasion of the State. Even after Sumter was fired on, every effort was made by the State to bring about a reconciliation between the estranged and divided sections. But it was too late. Troops were already marching on her. The State of Lee did not make war. War was made on her. And under the shock Virginia, on the 17th day of April, solemnly reversed her former action and seceded from the Union she had done so much to create and so much to make great.

"To have acceded to the demand [for her quota of troops to attack South Carolina] would," says Henderson, "have been to abjure the most cherished principles of her political existence. . . . Neutrality was impossible. She was bound to furnish her tale of troops and thus belie her principles, or to secede at once and reject with a clean conscience the President's mandate. . . . The world has long since done justice to the motives of Cromwell and of Washington, and signs are not wanting that before many years have passed

* Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 1st Sess. 39th Cong., pp. 71, 114, 115.

it will do justice to the motives of the Southern people."

Speaking of Virginia's action specifically, he declares: "Her best endeavors were exerted to maintain the peace between the hostile sections, and not till her liberties were menaced did she repudiate a compact which had become intolerable. It was to preserve the freedom which her forefathers had bequeathed her, and which she desired to hand down unsullied to future generations, that she acquiesced in the revolution." *

Her action concluded her citizens. This was Lee's view, as he, after the war, stated under oath before the commission appointed to inquire into the reconstruction of the States, and it was the view of every man who sat in her convention, Unionist and Secessionist. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of the intelligent men in what was known as Old Virginia, the great section east of the Alleghanies which had largely made her history, bowed to her decree, and not with the less unanimity that a considerable element among them were grief-stricken at her decision to separate from the Union which their fathers had done so much to create.†

* Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson," I, pp. 101, 102.

† The writer's father was a stanch Union man, and stood out against secession till the last; but three days after Virginia se-

Among these was Robert E. Lee. "I can contemplate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union," wrote Lee in January. In April the calamity had come. The Union was dissolved in so far as his State was concerned, and he had only one course left that he could take with honor. Before him stood the example of his life-long model, Washington, who, having fought with Braddock under the English flag, when war came between England and his State, threw in his lot with his people. To him his thoughts recurred not only at this moment of supreme decision, but years afterward, in the seclusion of the little mountain town where he spent the evening of his days, as the head of the academic institution which Washington had endowed. "In the interviews between General Scott and Colonel Lee," says Long, "it is stated that the veteran commander earnestly sought to persuade the younger officer not to throw up his commission, telling him that it would be the greatest mistake of his life. But to all his pleadings Colonel Lee returned but one answer—that his sense of duty was stronger with him than any

ceded he enlisted as a private in an infantry company, known as the "Patrick Henry Rifles," Co. C, 3d Va. Regt., later 15th Va. Regt., and fought through to Appomattox.

prospects of advancement, replying to the appeal not to send in his resignation in the following words: 'I am compelled to; I cannot consult my own feelings in this matter.'" *

Two or three days later, on the 20th of April, the same day on which he tendered the resignation of his command of his regiment of cavalry, he wrote to both his brother and sister, informing them of the grounds of his action. To his brother, with whom he had had an earnest consultation on the subject two days before, he stated that, after the most anxious inquiry as to the correct course for him to pursue, he had decided the matter in his own mind, and had concluded to resign—had, indeed, sent in his resignation—and he had no desire ever again to draw his sword save in defence of his native State. To his sister, whose husband and son espoused the Union cause, he wrote:

"With all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have, therefore, resigned my commission in the army, and save in defence of my native State, with the sincere hope that my

* General A. L. Long's "Memoirs of Robert E. Lee."

poor services may never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword. I know you will blame me; but you must think as kindly of me as you can, and believe that I have endeavored to do what I thought right."

Could any appeal have come straighter from the heart! That they might see how he felt the step he took, he enclosed to his brother and sister a copy of the letter he had written General Scott.

All that we know is that, sacrificing place and honors and emoluments, leaving his home to the sack of the enemy already preparing to seize it, he decided in the sight of God, under the all-compelling sense of duty; and this is enough for us to know. What did the politicians clamoring for war know of the motives that inspired his high soul! His letter to General Scott tendering his resignation is full of noble dignity, and not without a note of noble pathos where he says, in its conclusion, "I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollection of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me." And to his dying day he always held his old commander in undiminished affection and honor.

Yet, however clear Lee was in his view as to his own duty, he left others to judge for them-

selves. Holding that the matter was one of conscience, he did not attempt to decide the momentous question for others—not even for his own son. Nearly a month after he had resigned (May 13, 1861), he wrote to his wife: "Tell Custis he must consult his own judgment, reason, and conscience as to the course he may take. I do not wish him to be guided by my wishes or example. If I have done wrong, let him do better. The present is a momentous question which every man must settle for himself and upon principle." Custis, who had graduated at the head of his class at West Point, had been assigned to the Engineers, and on his resignation from the army, soon after his father wrote this letter, was assigned to duty in preparing the defences of Richmond. He later rose to the rank of major-general, C. S. A.

After the war, when Lee was perhaps the most famous captain of the world, he from time to time recurred to this action. For example, in a letter to General Beauregard, written the day after his entrance on his duties at Washington College, he refers to it:

"I need not tell you," he says, "that true patriotism sometimes requires men to act exactly contrary at one period to that which it does at another, and the motive which impels them—the

desire to do right—is precisely the same. History is full of illustrations of this. Washington himself is an example. [He was ever his example.] He fought at one time against the French under Braddock, in the service of the king of Great Britain; at another, he fought with the French at Yorktown, under the orders of the Continental Congress, against him. He has not been branded by the world with reproach for this; but his course has been applauded."

To the committee of Congress before whom he was called after the war, he stated that he resigned because he believed that the act of Virginia in withdrawing herself from the United States carried him along with it as a citizen of Virginia, and that her laws and acts were binding upon him.*

On another occasion he stated his motives in his action at this crisis. He says in a letter to an old friend:† "I must give you my thanks for doing me the justice to believe that my conduct during the last five years has been governed by my sense of duty. I had no other guide, nor had I any other object than the defence of those prin-

* Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 1st Sess. 39th Cong., p. 133.

† In a letter of July 9, 1866, to Captain James May.

ciples of American liberty upon which the constitutions of the several States were originally founded, and unless they are strictly observed I fear there will be an end to republican government in this country."

While the harpies were screaming and clamoring, and blind partisanship was declaiming about leaving him to the "avenging pen of history," his high soul dwelt in the serene air of consciousness of duty performed. He said to General Wade Hampton, in June, 1869: "I could have taken no other course save in dishonor, and if it were all to be gone over again, I should act in precisely the same way."

Thus spoke his constant soul. It was his deliberate judgment on calm reflection, with all the consequences known to him. As before writing it he cast his mind back, how he must have seen everything in the clear light of the inexorable past —all the sacrifices he had made: the chief command of the Union armies, with a great fleet at his back to keep open his lines of communication, hold the world for his recruiting ground, and blockade the South until starvation forced capitulation. It had lifted Grant from poverty and obscurity to the Presidency, while his own choice, to follow his State and obey her sacred laws,

had reduced him from station and affluence to poverty and toil. His beautiful home had been confiscated and turned into a cemetery. Its priceless treasures, endeared by association with Washington, had been seized and scattered. A trial for treason impended. He had been indicted with Mr. Davis by a mixed grand jury of negroes and whites, selected for the purpose, and the furious pack were yet trying to hunt him down. Yet there was no repining—no questioning. "There was quietness in that man's mind." When the sky was darkened he had simply lighted the candles and gone on with his duty.

"Duty is the sublimest word in our language," he had declared long before, and by it as a pilot-star he ever steered his steadfast course, abiding with calm satisfaction whatever issue God decreed.

"We are conscious that we have humbly tried to do our duty," he said, about a year after the war; "we may, therefore, with calm satisfaction trust in God and leave results to Him."

In this devotion to duty and calm reliance on God lay the secret of his life. The same spirit animated his great lieutenant. "Duty belongs to us, consequences belong to God," said Jackson.

The same spirit animated the men who followed them. It was the teaching of the Southern home which produced the type of character, the deep foundations of which were devotion to duty and reliance on God.

## IV

### RESOURCES

AND now, dealing with the fruits of character, we come to the proposition, whether Lee was, as some have claimed, a great captain only for defensive operations, or was a great captain without reservation or limitation—one of the great captains of history whose genius was equal to every exigency of war to which human genius may rise.

The question involved is of his greatness both as a soldier and as a man. And to some extent it reaches far beyond the confines of the South and involves the basic traits of race and of civilization. It was nobly said by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Sr., to whom almost as much as to Lincoln or Grant the final result of the war was due, when, as the representative of the United States in England, he was challenged on an occasion with the argument that the armies of the South had defeated the armies of the North, and was asked what he had to say about it: "That they also are my countrymen." Thus, Lee's

genius and Lee's fame are the possession of the whole country and the whole race, which his virtue honored.

And first, in weighing his abilities as a captain, we may ask: What constitutes a great captain? The question takes us far into the records of both war and peace. To most men the answer will come by the process of recalling the few—the very few—whom history has by universal consent placed in the first rank. They are Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Frederick, and Napoleon, with Cromwell, Turenne, Eugene, Gustavus, Marlborough, Washington, Wellington in a class so close to them in fame as to leave in doubt the rank to which at least one or two of them should be assigned. And on their heels crowd a concourse of captains great and victorious, yet easily distinguishable from the first, if confusingly close on the others.

Napoleon reckoned as his masters for constant study the first four, and Gustavus, Turenne, and Eugene.

Among the modern captains stand two conspicuous Americans: first, Washington, whose greatness proved equal to every exaction, and who gave promise that he would have commanded successfully under all conditions that might have

arisen; and, secondly, the persistent, indomitable Grant, victor of Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge, and Appomattox, not so brilliant as Marlborough or Frederick, for no flashing stroke of genius like Blenheim or Leuthen adorned his record, but able, resourceful, constant, indomitable, like Scipio or Cromwell.

What placed those few men of the first rank before all others? Not final success. For though success final and absolute crowned most of them, final and irrevocable defeat was the last reward of others, and these the greatest: Hannibal and Napoleon. Such rank, then, was won notwithstanding ultimate defeat, and in reckoning its elements, final success bears no essential part.

Studying these captains closely, we discern in all certain gifts divided as they were by centuries and by the equally vast gulf of racial differences. First, imagination—the divine imagination to conceive a great cause and the means to support it. It may be to conquer the world, or Rome, or Europe. I conceive that it was this supreme gift that led Alexander to sleep with the casket-set of the "Iliad" under his pillow beside his dagger, and to declare them the best compendium of the soldier's art.

Next, there must be the comprehensive grasp

that seizes and holds firmly great campaigns in their completeness, together with the mastery of every detail in their execution, both great and small. There must be incarnate energy; a tireless mind in a tireless body, informed with zeal; the mental, moral, and physical courage in complete and overpowering combination to compel men to obedience, instant and loyal, under all conditions whatsoever; to inspire them with new forces and endow them with the power to carry out orders through every possible chance and change. These, taken all together, give the grand strategy. Its foundation is the combination in a brave soldier of a rare imagination and of a rarer intellect. No amount of fighting power or of capacity for calling it forth in others proves this endowment. In the Napoleonic wars, "Ney and Blücher," says Henderson, "were probably the best fighting generals of France and Prussia. But neither could be trusted to conduct a campaign."*

Then there must be the supreme constancy to withstand every shock of surprise or defeat without a tremor or a doubt, before which mere courage becomes paltry, and constant, imminent danger dwindles to a bare incident, serving only to

* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," I, p. 93.

quicken the spirit and fan its last ember to a consuming flame.

With these must exist an intuitive and profound knowledge of human nature and of men, singly and in combination; power to divine the adversary's every design, and to fathom his deepest intention; equal to every exigency, amounting to inspiration; all culminating in the power to foresee, to prepare for, divine, and seize the critical moment, and, mastering Fate, win where others would lose, or, having lost, save where others would be destroyed. Then there must be the intuitive knowledge of men and the capacity to pick and inspire and use them. There must be a profound and exact knowledge of the art of war as practised by the great masters of all ages. And finally, fusing all in one complete and harmonious whole, crowning this whole with the one final and absolute essential must be the God-given personal endowment of genius, undefined, indefinable; unmeasured, immeasurable; sometimes flaming at the very first, sometimes slumbering through years to burst forth at the moment of supreme crisis; sometimes hardly recognized until its light is caught down the long perspective of the years, but, when caught, recognized as genius.

Without this a man may be a great captain, a victorious captain; but not the greatest or among the greatest.

Thus, we come to the measure of Lee's greatness as a captain.

The measure of a captain's abilities must rest, at last, on his achievement as gauged by his resources.

Let us see what Lee accomplished with his means; then we shall be the better able to reckon the measure of his success. Let us turn aside for a moment for the consideration of a few figures. They are a dry and unpalatable diet, but, after all, it was to the science of arithmetic that the South yielded at the end.

The South began the war with a white population of about 5,500,000. Of these her military population numbered about 1,065,000,* but one-fifth of these were inhabitants of the mountain regions, who warmly espoused the side of the Union.

The North began the war with a white population of about 22,000,000. Of these her fighting men whom she could call into the field numbered

* Besides these she had a servile population of about 3,500,000, of which a certain proportion were available for raising subsistence for the army.

about 3,900,000.* The South enlisted at most about 900,000. The North enrolled of her fighting men about 1,700,000,† besides which she enlisted of foreigners about 700,000 and of negroes about 186,000.

The North had an organized National Government, with all departments—State, War, Navy, Treasury, and Justice—perfectly organized and equipped, while the South not only had to organize her Confederated Government, but fought on a principle of States' Rights, which left to each State a power capable of neutralizing the general government at the most critical junctures. The North had about $11,000,000,000 of taxable values as against about $5,000,000,000 in the South, of which $2,000,000,000 was represented by the slaves. The South had the advantage of the inner line; but she was not only assailable by sea; she was divided by numerous great rivers accessible to the enemy's fleet, and she was cut in half by a great mountain region which stretched like a vast bar across her entire extent, and was occupied by a brave and bitterly hostile popula-

* Besides, of the negroes, the North drew into her armies about 186,000, they being the most able-bodied of this class.

† *Cf.* "Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America," pp. 40 and 50, Colonel Thomas L. Livermore. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

tion that furnished to the Union armies some 180,000 fighting men. Had this population sided with the South, the advantage to her would have been immeasurable. Maryland and Kentucky would have joined the Confederacy; West Virginia and East Tennessee and all that they represented would have flung into the Southern scale, instead of into the Northern, all their weight, and possibly the whole preponderance of weight might have been shifted. This mountain region, extended through the South, furnished not only a great recruiting ground for the Union, but a refuge for her armies and a territory as ready for her occupation as Pennsylvania or Minnesota. Without this great Union region, McClellan might have ended his days in obscurity without crossing the Kanawha—Missionary Ridge and Chattanooga could hardly have become battle-fields, and the March to the Sea would probably never have begun.

The North had by far the best means of transportation, a large percentage of the efficient railways, and the means of railway equipment.

In addition to this, the North had nearly all the manufactures, and possessed a superiority in equipment that is incalculable. When the war broke out, the South could scarcely manufacture

a tin cup or a frying-pan, a railway iron, a wool-card, or a carpenter's tool. In the possession of arms the North was as superoir to the South as she was in other manufactured material. This was shown at the first battle of Manassas, when McDowell's guns, beyond the range of Beauregard's smooth-bores, hammered to pieces the Confederate left. The South improved its stock of guns that day, adding before night 25 cannon to their store; but she was generally deficient in equipment to the very end. The repeating carbines of the Federal cavalry later in the war multiplied their force many fold. General Gorgas, the chief of ordnance of the Confederate States, found within the limits of the Confederacy but "15,000 rifles and 120,000 inferior muskets, with some old flint-muskets at Richmond, and Hall's rifles and carbines at Baton Rouge. There was no powder except small quantities at Baton Rouge and at Mount Vernon, Ala. There was very little artillery and no cavalry arms or equipments." General Johnston said of Gorgas, that "he created the ordnance department out of nothing." The day after the victory of First Manassas, there was not powder enough left in Virginia to fight another battle. The North possessed nearly the whole old navy, ships and men, the

naval forces, and the population from which the seamen were drawn. And finally, and above all, the North had the ear of the world.

With this superiority she was enabled to blockade the South and lock her within her own confines, while the world was open to her, and she could await, with what patience she could command, the fatal result of "the policy of attrition."

No adequate account of the value of the navy to the Union side has ever been given, or, at least, has ever reached the public ear. The navy turned the scale in the war. Had the navy been on the side of the Confederacy instead of on the Union side, it is as certain that the South would have made good her position as is any other fact established by reason. The navy with its 200,000 men enabled the Union not only to seal up the South against all aid from without, but to penetrate into the heart of the Confederacy, command her interior waters, and form at once the base of supplies for the Union armies when advancing, and their protection when defeated.*

It is not meant to imply that figures give an

* *Cf.* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," I, chap. V, p. 113. "Judicious, indeed," he says, "was the policy which at the very outset of the war brought the tremendous pressure of the sea-power to bear against the South."

exact statement of the problem that was worked out during the war; but they cast a light upon it which contributes greatly to its just comprehension.

In round numbers the South had on her muster-rolls, from first to last, less than 900,000 men. And in this list the South had all she could muster; for, at the last, she had enlisted in her reserves all men between sixteen and sixty years. In round numbers the North had 2,700,000, and besides, had all Europe as her recruiting field.*

* Colonel Thomas L. Livermore, of Boston, author of the notable work, "Numbers and Losses," in a letter to the writer says: "I suppose that it would be safe to assume that eighty per cent (of the enlistments) would hold in all the Northern States. This would give about 2,234,000 individuals in the army. The Record and Business Bureau, in its memorandum of 1896, computed the average estimates of re-enlistments by different authorities at 543,393."

The Confederate forces he estimates at "1,239,000, the number shown by the census to have been within the conscript age, less the number of exempts (partly estimated and partly recorded), and an estimate of the natural deaths; or at about 1,000,000 estimated proportionally to the killed and wounded in the two armies." It will be seen that his first estimate above takes no account of the numbers of Southerners in the mountain regions who sided with the Union.

General Marcus J. Wright places the total number of the Southern troops at less than 700,000. The total number within the conscript age he places at 1,065,000.

Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," estimates them at about 900,000.

I have felt that possibly this trained and impartial soldier of another nation might have arrived at a fairer estimate than any one on this side the Atlantic.

For calculations of Colonel Livermore and General Wright, see Appendix A.

When the war closed, the South had in the field throughout her territory but 175,000 men opposed to the armies of the North, numbering 980,000 men.*

Toward the close of the war the South was wellnigh stripped naked, and for what was left she had no means of transportation. She had no nitre for her powder, no brass for her percussion caps—the very kettles and stills from the plantations had been used—and when it was necessary to repair one railroad as a line for transportation, to meet the emergency the best rails were taken up from another road less important.

The commissariat and the quartermaster's department were bad enough, and Lee's army starved to a shadow. Study of the matter will, however,

* Of 346,744 Federal soldiers examined for military service after March 6, 1863, sixty-nine per cent were Americans, the rest were foreigners. In the 35th Mass. Regt., which, says Henderson, may be taken as a typical Northern regiment, of 495 recruits received during 1864, 400 were German immigrants. (Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson," 1st ed., I, p. 466.)

The South, or rather those orators who stood as the economists of the South, had supposed that her cotton and tobacco were so necessary to the rest of the world that the European nations would take her part, out of plain consideration for their own welfare. It was a great error. The value of the cotton crop exported in 1860 was $202,741,351. In 1861 it was $42,000,000. In 1862 it was $4,000,000. After that it was next to nothing; yet it was the principal source of revenue of the government with which to purchase such supplies and munitions of war in Europe as were brought in by blockade-runners.

convince any one that at the very last it was rather owing to the desperate condition of the lines of transportation than to mere inefficiency of the commissariat and the quartermaster's department, to which it has been so often charged, that Lee failed to carry out his final plan of effecting a junction with Johnston.*

In fact, from the first a considerable proportion of the equipment of the Southern armies and all of their best equipment had been captured by them on the field of battle. So regular had been their application to this source of supply that, says Henderson in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," "the dishonesty of the Northern contractors was a constant source of complaint among the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia."

An English soldier and critic, Colonel Lawler, writing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, has declared his doubt whether any general of modern history could have sustained for four years—a longer time nowadays than Hannibal's fifteen years in Italy in times past—a war in which, possessed of scanty resources himself, he had against him so enormous an aggregate of men, horses, ships, and

* I can remember my surprise as a boy at seeing wagons hauling straw from my home to Petersburg, sixty-odd miles, through roads the like of which, I trust in Grace, do not now exist in the United States.

supplies. It is an under, rather than an over, estimate to state that during the first two years the odds, all told, were ten to one, during the last two years, twenty to one, against the Confederates.*

Truly, then, said General Lee to General Early, in the winter of 1865–66: "It will be difficult to get the world to understand the odds against which we fought." It is known by some in the South—the survivors of those armies who tracked the frozen roads of Virginia with bleeding feet, whose breakfast was often nothing but water from a roadside well, and whose dinner nothing but a tightened belt. Some knew it who knew the war-swept South in their boyhood, where the threat was that a crow flying over it should have to carry his rations, and the fact was more terrible than the prophecy.

But it is well for the race to make the world know it. It is well that the truth should be revealed.

In the foregoing computation it is true enough to say that we have not reckoned all the resources of the South. She had Lee, and she had Jackson; she had the men who followed them, and the women who sustained those men. "Lee

* Jones's "Lee," p. 75.

and Jackson," says Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," "were worth 200,000 men to any armies they commanded." Quoting Moltke's saying, that the junction of two armies on the field of battle is the highest achievement of military genius, he says in comment: "Tried by this test alone, Lee stands out as one of the greatest soldiers of all time. Not only against Pope, but against McClellan at Gaines's Mill, against Burnside at Fredericksburg, and against Hooker at Chancellorsville, he succeeded in carrying out the operations of which Moltke speaks."

But this is not all. No reckoning of the opposing forces can be made without taking into account the men who followed Lee and Jackson, and the women who stayed at home and sustained them. No people ever gave more promptly to their country's cause than did the old American element of the North, or would have been readier, had occasion arisen, to suffer on their country's behalf. But it is no disparagement of them to state the simple fact that the war did not reach them as a people as it reached the people of the South. Where a class gave at the North, the whole population of the South gave; whereas a fraction suffered at the North, the entire population of the South suffered. The rich

grew to be as the poor, and, together with the poor, learned to know actual hunger. The delicately nurtured came to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. War in its most brutal and terrible form came to be known all over the land: known in disease without medicines; in life without the common necessaries of life; in ravaged districts, bombarded and blackened towns, burnt homesteads, terrorized and starving women and children. This the South came to know throughout a large extent of her territory. Yet, through it all her people bore themselves with a constancy that must ever be a monument to them, and that even in the breast of those who were children in that stirring period must ever keep alive the hallowed memory of her undying resolution.

"All honor and praise to the fair Southern women!" declared a Richmond paper in the closing days of 1862. "May the future historian, when he comes to write of this war, fail not to award them their due share of praise." No history of this war could be written without such due award. It is not too much to say that as brave and constant as were the intrepid soldiery that with steadily wasting ranks followed Lee from Seven Pines to Appomattox, even more brave and constant were the women who stayed

at home. Gentle and simple, they gave their husbands, their brothers, and their sons to the cause of the South, sorrowing chiefly that they themselves were too feeble to stand at their side. Hungering in body and heart, they bore with more than a soldier's courage, more than a soldier's hardship, and to the last, undaunted and dauntless, gave them a new courage as with tear-dimmed eyes they sustained them in the darkest hours of their despondency and defeat.

Such were among the elements which even in the South's darkest hour Lee had at his back. From such elements Lee himself had sprung, and in his character he was their supreme expression.

## V

### LEE IN WEST VIRGINIA

AND now, bearing clearly in mind what his resources were, we may approach the question intelligently, whether Lee was, as charged by some, great only in defence and when on interior lines and behind breastworks, or was really the greatest soldier of his time, and, perhaps, of the English-speaking race.

Lee was now fifty-four years old, having reached this age without higher rank than that of colonel, the age at which most of the great captains have won their laurels and laid down their swords. But he was yet in the prime of physical and intellectual manhood. His temperate habits had borne rich fruit, and possibly in neither army had he his superior in bodily or mental force or endurance. He was "as ruddy as young David from the sheepfolds," says one who saw him then for the first time. Immediately on his resignation from the army of the United States, Lee was tendered by the governor of Virginia the com-

mand of the forces of the State, which was in the throes of preparation to repel the invasion of her territory, and on the 23d of April he received, at the hands of the president of the State convention, the commission of major-general of the Virginia forces. It was an impressive occasion, for the brief ceremony took place in the presence of the convention which had so long stood against secession, but had declared with one voice against tolerating invasion. Virginia was there to do him honor. The president of the convention, the Hon. John Janney, in a brief speech, recalling the example of Washington, announced to him the fact that the convention had by a unanimous vote expressed their conviction that among living Virginians he was "first in war"; that they prayed he might so conduct the operations committed to his charge that it should soon be said of him that he was "first in peace," and that when that time came, he should have earned the still prouder distinction of being "first in the hearts of his countrymen." He further recalled to him that Washington in his will had given his swords to his favorite nephews, with an injunction that they should never be drawn from their scabbards except in self-defence or in defence of the rights and liberties of their country.

He said in closing: "Yesterday your mother Virginia placed her sword in your hand, upon the implied condition that we know you will keep to the letter and in spirit, that you will draw it only in defence, and that you will fall with it in your hand rather than the object for which it was placed there should fail."

To this Lee replied in the following simple words: "Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: Profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, for which I must say I was not prepared, I accept the position assigned me by your partiality. I would have much preferred that your choice had fallen upon an abler man. Trusting in Almighty God, an approving conscience, and the aid of my fellow-citizens, I devote myself to the service of my native State, in whose behalf alone will I ever again draw my sword."

Thus, passing into the service of his native State in the dire hour of her need, Lee was appointed a major-general of Virginia's forces, to resist the invasion of Virginia's soil, and it was not until the end of August, when war was flagrant throughout the land, and Virginia had been actually invaded, that he became an officer of the Confederate States. Lee set to work promptly to

place Virginia in a posture of defence. He established camps for instruction, and soon had some 30,000 men under drill, who in a few months increased to 60,000.

On the evening of the day on which Lee received, at the hands of the president of the Virginia convention, his commission as commander-in-chief of the naval and military forces of the commonwealth, an occasion presented itself for him to show the nobleness of his character, and he met it with the unselfishness which was the mark of the man. Among the spectators of the ceremony that day was the Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, the Vice-President of the Confederate States. He had come to Richmond for "the purpose of inducing Virginia to enter the Confederacy," which was "to undo, so far as General Lee was concerned, the work which had been that morning performed." "The members of the convention," states Mr. Stephens, "had seen at once that Lee was left out of the proposed compact that was to make Virginia one of the Confederate States, and I knew that one word, or even a look of dissatisfaction, from him would terminate the negotiations with which I was intrusted. North Carolina would act with Virginia, and either the border States would protect our lines or the

battle-field be moved at once down to South Carolina and the borders of Georgia." Accordingly, that evening Mr. Stephens sought an interview with General Lee for the purpose of making to him a "proposal that he resign, without any compensation or promise therefor, the very honor and rank he had that same morning received."

Surely Lee must have recalled the difference between this proposal and the one which he had received hardly a week before, when the command of the Union armies had been tendered him; but if he did, he gave no sign of it. "General Lee met me quietly," says Mr. Stephens, "understood the situation at once, and saw that he alone stood between the Confederacy and his State. . . . General Lee did not hesitate for one moment, and while he saw that it would make matters worse to throw up his commission, he declared that no personal ambition or emolument should be considered or stand in the way!

"I had admired him in the morning," adds Mr. Stephens, "but I took his hand that night at parting with feelings of respect, and almost reverence never yet effaced. I met him at times later, and he was always the same Christian gentleman.

"Virginia became one of us, and the battlefield, as all men know, and General Lee took subordinate positions which for a time placed him nearly out of sight."

On the 2d of May Lee wrote his wife: "I have just received Custis's letter of the 30th, inclosing the acceptance of my resignation. It is stated it will take effect on the 25th of April. I resigned on the 20th, and wished it to take effect on that day. I cannot consent to its running on further, and he must receive no pay, if they tender it, beyond that day, but return the whole if need be."

From Richmond, May 13, 1861, Lee wrote his wife: "Do not put faith in rumors of adjustment. I see no prospect for it. It cannot be while passions on both sides are so infuriated. Make your plans for several years of war. If Virginia is invaded, which appears to be designed, the main routes through the country will, in all probability, be infested and passage interrupted. I agree with you in thinking that the inflammatory articles in the papers do us much harm. I object particularly to those in the Southern papers, as I wish them to take a firm, dignified course, free from bravado and boasting. The times are indeed calamitous. The brightness of God's

countenance seems turned from us, and its mercy stopped in its blissful current. It may not always be so dark, and he may in time pardon our sins and take us under his protection. Tell Custis* he must consult his own judgment, reason, and conscience as to the course he may take. I do not wish him to be guided by my wishes or example. If I have done wrong, let him do better. The present is a momentous question which every man must settle for himself and upon principle. Our good Bishop Meade has just come in to see me. He opens the convention to-morrow, and, I understood him to say, would preach his fiftieth anniversary sermon. God bless and guard you."

Immediately on the outbreak of war, Virginia, as anticipated, became the battle-ground. In June the Confederate Government moved its capital to Richmond, and naturally the object of the Union Government became the capture of that city. General Scott, indeed, had an idea that the government should avail itself of the strong Union sentiment throughout the North-west and Central West, and, utilizing the Mississippi, should send its army down that vast inland water-way

* His son, then a lieutenant in the Engineer Corps, United States army.

and seize New Orleans, thus cutting the Confederate South in two at the outset. But the government, with its seat at Washington, naturally thought otherwise, and the necessary consequence was the invasion of Virginia. The plan was to overrun this State and seize Richmond, where the Confederate Government was now establishing its capital, and where the only important factory of guns in the South (the Tredegar Iron Works) was situated. By this plan Washington could be protected at the same time that the advance to overrun Virginia was made. Accordingly, on the 21st of May the government troops, to the number of some 11,000 men, crossed the Potomac, seized Alexandria, and occupied the heights of Arlington, which they immediately proceeded to fortify for permanent occupation, with a view to pressing forward in obedience to the cry which was now heard on all sides: "On to Richmond!"

Three or four routes for the advance on Richmond presented themselves for consideration, following in the main the several railroad lines which crossed Virginia, and offered lines of communication and means of transportation.

The most direct route was by the Potomac to Acquia Creek, some thirty-odd miles below Washington, and thence along the Richmond and Fred-

ericksburg Railway by Fredericksburg and Hanover Junction. This was the route which was attempted two years later by Burnside with such disastrous consequences at Fredericksburg, and still later with variations by Hooker and Grant. Another route was by the Potomac and the Chesapeake Bay, either to the mouth of the Rappahannock, or to Fortress Monroe, at the mouth of the James, and thence up the York or the James to a point comparatively near to Richmond. This last was the route followed by McClellan in the spring of 1862. The third was along the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad—the present Southern Railway—running south-westerly from Alexandria by Manassas Junction, about thirty miles off (where a branch line ran westwardly through the Blue Ridge into the Shenandoah Valley), and Culpeper Court House to Gordonsville. Here it met almost at right angles the Virginia Central Railroad, running from Richmond by Hanover Junction to Gordonsville, and on by Charlottesville to Staunton, in the Valley of Virginia—the upper Shenandoah Valley. At Charlottesville another railway line ran southwardly to Lynchburg, on the upper James, and on through South-western Virginia to Tennessee. The fourth route, the longest and least feasible,

lay along the railway from Harper's Ferry, the point at which the Potomac breaks through the Blue Ridge, to Winchester, and thence through the fertile Valley of Virginia to Staunton, on the Virginia Central Railway.

Thus, it will be seen that the only all-rail route to Richmond at the time lay along the Orange and Alexandria Railway, and that the two principal points thereon were Manassas Junction (where the branch road ran through Manassas Gap into the Shenandoah Valley) and Gordonsville, where the road joined the Virginia Central Railway, the direct route from Richmond to both the upper Shenandoah Valley and the South-west. This route had the additional advantages that it ran through a fertile and open country, with comparatively good roads, and with streams less difficult to cross than lower down, where the Rappahannock and the North Anna presented serious obstacles if properly defended.

Up to this time Colonel Thomas J. Jackson had commanded the raw contingent of Southern troops who held Harper's Ferry at the point where the Shenandoah joins the Potomac and, thus reinforced, the latter breaks through the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Here had been the arsenal which John Brown

had crossed into Virginia to seize in October, 1859, in his mad attempt to arouse the slaves to insurrection. It was still considered a strategic point, and on the 23d of May, General Joseph E. Johnston was sent to take command of it, and of the Army of the Shenandoah, as it was called. He had been a classmate of Lee at West Point, and had served with such distinction in the war with Mexico that General Scott is said to have characterized him as "a great soldier." Fitz Lee, in his admirable "Life of General Lee," says of him that he became "distinguished before his beard grew," and that "his decision to fight under the flag of the South was hailed with delight by the Southern people."

Against him now was opposed Major-General Robert Patterson, of Pennsylvania, also a veteran, who had been placed by General Scott in command of the Department of Washington. Assisted by such able officers as Fitz John Porter, A. E. Burnside, George H. Thomas, and many others who later won high and deserved distinction, he had been busy organizing and equipping an army intended to seize Harper's Ferry, sweep up the valley of the Shenandoah, and, crossing the Blue Ridge, drive Beauregard from Manassas and seize this strategic point. He secured Har-

per's Ferry without a struggle, having, by an advance with the evident design of crossing the Potomac at Williamsport and flanking Johnston by marching to Martinsburg, forced him to abandon Harper's Ferry as untenable. Johnston posted himself at a point called Bunker Hill, with a view to fighting Patterson on selected ground if the chance offered before McClellan, who was reported to be advancing from Western Virginia, could join him. Patterson was in the act of crossing the Potomac when he received an order from General Scott to forward to Washington at once all the regular troops under his command, together with Colonel A. E. Burnside's picked Rhode Island regiment. General Scott for good reason, as appeared to him, had changed the plan by which he had proposed to fight the first pitched battle in the valley of the Shenandoah, and now planned to fight first at Manassas, while Patterson should hold Johnston in the valley.

The commander assigned to defend this important point by the Southern government was General Beauregard, a Louisianian of French extraction, as the name implies, and a gallant and able soldier. He had commanded at Charleston at the outbreak of hostilities, where he had shown ability both as an officer and as an engineer, and

he was now the idol of the Southern people, and was soon to increase this measure of approbation by his victory on the plain of Manassas.

A story used to be told, after the war, of some one having spoken to a creole gentleman of New Orleans of Lee in terms of warm praise, and having received the reply: "Yes, yes—I t'ink I have hear' Beauregard speak well of him."

It was apparent to Lee and the other trained soldiers that the first serious attempt of the Union generals would be to seize the strategic point presented by the junction at Manassas of the Orange and Alexandria Railway and of the railway running from Manassas to the Shenandoah Valley, where Johnston was opposing Patterson. Every effort was therefore made to prepare for the battle to be fought here. And to this Lee bent all his energies, organizing, equipping, and forwarding troops as fast as possible. Other points also had to be guarded. Norfolk, where Huger commanded, and the Peninsula between the York and the James River, where Magruder commanded, both had to be protected; but the chief anxiety at this time centred on Manassas. Lee was the third in rank of the major-generals appointed by Mr. Davis, and his first service was to put Virginia in a posture of defence. That he

promptly effected this was shown on the plain of Manassas, on July 21.

The troops organized for this movement were possibly about equal in number on both sides—some 30,000 men. With the invasion of Virginia the government at Washington had created what was known as the Department of Virginia, and to the command of this department was assigned General Irvin McDowell, a native of Ohio, of Virginian descent, and a gallant officer and gentleman. He laid out his plan of campaign to the satisfaction of his superiors in Washington, which was—to march on Manassas and, by turning Beauregard's left flank, manœuvre him out of his position. He was to have not less than 30,000 men, and the Southern troops in the Shenandoah Valley were to be held there by Patterson's force. This having been provided for, as was believed, McDowell, on the 16th of July, with entire confidence, put his army in motion for Manassas, where his old classmate and friend, Beauregard, awaited him with equal confidence in the issue. And here, on the uplands above the little stream known as Bull Run, the first great battle on Virginia soil was fought out, on the 21st of July, five days later.

Everything went with McDowell like clock-work,

only it was slow clock-work. Setting out from his camp at Alexandria on the 16th, he reached Centreville the following day, and instead of pressing forward, he spent two days in reconnoissances, and did not attack Beauregard until the morning of the 21st. For a time after the battle began the advantage was greatly in his favor, and by three o'clock he was pressing the defensive force hard.

One thing, however, had not been provided for properly. When McDowell laid his plan of campaign before his superiors in Washington, General Scott had promised him that if Johnston, lying about Winchester, in the Shenandoah Valley beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains, some fifty miles away, attempted to reinforce Beauregard, he should find Patterson hanging on his heels. But he did not reckon with the full ability of Johnston or his lieutenants, Jackson and Stuart. It had already been decided in Richmond, where Lee was at work, with the chess-board before him, what moves and counter-moves would be made, and no sooner was McDowell on the march than steps were taken to meet the shock of the approaching encounter with the full force of the Confederate armies within call. General Holmes, with his brigade backed by a battery of artillery

and cavalry, was ordered up from Acquia Creek, thirty miles to the south-east, and General Johnston was also ordered to slip away from Patterson, and, crossing the Blue Ridge, join Beauregard. Holmes arrived duly, and Johnston arrived on the 20th from the Shenandoah Valley, with the brigades of Bee, Bartow, and Jackson, his other brigades, under Kirby Smith and Elzey, arriving next day. Stuart also appeared on time after a forced march across the mountains. The numbers on both sides were about equal, but the arrival of this fresh force of Johnston's in the nick of time turned the scale. The advance of the Federals against the Confederate left was first checked, then turned into a repulse, and then into a decisive defeat, which soon became a disastrous rout.

Unfortunately for the Southern cause the victory of Manassas was not followed up. The magnitude of the disaster was fully recognized by the North, and President Lincoln issued a call the next day for 500,000 troops, and summoned from Western Virginia, where he had displayed qualities of a high order, the most promising young general in the service, George B. McClellan. But at the South it appeared as if it were generally thought that this victory had decided the issue

of the war. The simple fact, however, was that the victorious army was without the necessary equipment to take the field.

Although Lee was not present in this great first battle on Virginia soil, his hand was clearly shown in the provision made for the crisis, and although he gave no outward sign by which it could be known, he must have inwardly chafed at the fate which at this critical period consigned him to the bureau service of an adjutant's office.

On June 9, 1861, he wrote to his wife: "You may be aware that the Confederate Government is established here. Yesterday I turned over to it the command of the military and naval forces of the State, in accordance with the proclamation of the governor, under an agreement between the State and the Confederate States. I do not know what my position will be. I should like to retire to private life, so that I could be with you and the children; but if I can be of service to the State or her cause, I must continue. Mr. Davis and all his Cabinet are here." And two days afterward he displays his fortitude and his piety when he tells her: "I am sorry to learn that you are anxious and uneasy about passing events. We cannot change or hinder them, and it is not the part of wisdom to be annoyed by them. In

this time of great suffering to the State and country, our private distresses we must bear with resignation, and not aggravate them by repining, trusting to a kind and merciful God to overrule them for our good."

Lee was now an officer without a command, or, possibly, even without rank. "Nominally," says Mr. Alexander H. Stephens, "General Lee lost nothing; but practically, for the time being, he lost everything. The government moved to Richmond, and Mr. Davis directed General Lee to retain his command of the Virginia troops, which was really to make him recruiting and drill inspector. . . ."

On June 14 Lee wrote to his wife from Richmond, where he was engaged in the important but somewhat humdrum labor of providing an army for another to command: "My movements are very uncertain, and I wish to take the field as soon as certain arrangements can be made. I may go at any moment to any point where it may be necessary."

On the 12th of July he wrote her again: "I am very anxious to get into the field, but am detained by matters beyond my control. I have never heard of the assignment to which you allude—of commander-in-chief of the Southern army

—nor have I any expectation or wish for it. President Davis holds that position. I have been laboring to prepare and get into the field the Virginia troops to strengthen those from other States and the threatened commands of Johnston, Beauregard, Huger, Garnett, etc. Where I shall go I do not know, as that will depend on President Davis."

Was ever soldier more unselfish!

Lee was not one of those who had any delusions as to the magnitude of the struggle, or as to Manassas having decided the fortunes of the war. On July 27, six days after the battle, he wrote Mrs. Lee again from Richmond: "That, indeed, was a glorious victory, and has lightened the pressure upon us amazingly. Do not grieve for the brave dead; but sorrow for those they have left behind—friends, relatives, and families. The former are at rest; the latter must suffer. The battle will be repeated there in greater force. I hope God will again smile on us, and strengthen our hearts and arms. I wished to partake in the former struggle, and am mortified at my absence. But the President thought it more important that I should be here. I could not have done as well as has been done, but I could have helped and taken part in a struggle for my home and

neighborhood. So the work is done, I care not by whom it is done. I leave to-morrow for the army in Western Virginia."

Indeed, it is stated that so far was General Lee from being influenced by any considerations of a selfish nature, that when Virginia joined the Southern Confederacy and left him without rank, he seriously contemplated enlisting in the company of cavalry commanded by his son.* General Long, his military secretary, gives this account of his first interview with General Lee. Having resigned his commission in the United States army, Long reported to Richmond, in company with three other officers, Colonels Loring and Stevenson, and Lieutenant Deshler, who had likewise resigned, and waited upon General Lee to offer their services to him. He was struck, he states, with the ease and grace of his bearing, and his courteous and mild but decided manner; and the high opinion he then formed of him was fully sustained in the intimate relations which afterward existed between them. Though at that time he had attained the age of fifty-four years, his erect and muscular frame, firm step, and the animated expression of his eye made him appear much younger. He exhibited no external signs of his rank, his

* Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee."

dress being a plain suit of gray. His office was simply furnished with plain desks and chairs. There were no handsomely dressed aides-de-camp or staff officers filling the anteroom. There was not even a sentinel to mark the military head-quarters. His only attendants were Captain Walter Taylor—afterward Colonel Taylor—adjutant-general of the Army of Northern Virginia, and two or three clerks.

Indeed, Lee was ever the simplest of men in his personal surroundings. Again and again we have a glimpse of him in the correspondence and memoirs of the time. His camp equipage was of the simplest character—his table service was of "neat tin," the pieces of which slipped into each other. A single head-quarters wagon sufficed for the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, and many a brigadier rode with a more imposing staff than accompanied him.

The game, as it appears now to all, and as it appeared then to those who had to shoulder the responsibility of playing it, was, on the one side, the sealing up of the South within its own borders, the suppression of the power of the border States, such as Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, to join the South, and the cutting in two of the section already seceded; on the other, it was the

simple maintenance of the status quo of the seceded section, the power to exercise the right of secession in the border States, and the resistance of invasion. There was no claim on the part of the South to the right of invasion, and no thought of invasion of the North until the exactions of war made it necessary as a counter-stroke. Even after the victory of Manassas, while the eager element clamored because the victory was not followed up, the Confederate Government held back the eager Jackson and sustained the prudent Johnston. Such being the game, it was played on both sides with clear vision and impressive determination. And no one saw more clearly than Lee the magnitude of the impending struggle.

Of Lee's far-sightedness we have signal proof in his letters. While others discussed the war as a matter of days and occasion for a summer holiday, he, with wider knowledge and clearer prevision, reckoned its duration at full four years, and possibly at even ten. A letter from General Lee to his wife, who was still at Arlington, April 30, 1861, tells her that he is "glad to hear all is well and as yet peaceful. I fear the latter state will not continue long;" he adds, "I think, therefore, you had better prepare all things for removal from Arlington—that is, plate, pictures, etc.—and be

prepared at any moment. Where to go is the difficulty. When the war commences no place will be exempt; in my opinion, indeed, all the avenues into the State will be the scene of military operations. I wrote to Robert [his son] that I could not consent to take boys from their schools and young men from their colleges and put them in the ranks at the beginning of the war, when they are not needed. The war may last ten years. Where are our ranks to be filled from then?"

And again he writes: "I am very anxious about you. You have to move, and make arrangements to go to some point of safety, which you must select. The Mount Vernon plate and pictures ought to be secured. War is inevitable, and there is no telling when it will burst around you. Virginia yesterday, I understand, joined the Confederate States. What policy they may adopt I cannot conjecture."

It is said that one of the few speeches he ever made was that in which, responding to urgent calls from a crowd assembled at a railway station to see him, he, in a few grave sentences, bade them go home and prepare for a long and terrible war.

We have seen that immediately after the victory of Manassas, when many were asserting that

the war would end at once, Lee wrote his wife that another battle would have to be fought there. "We must make up our minds," he wrote, in February of 1862, "to meet with reverses and to overcome them. But the contest must be long, and the whole country has to go through much suffering." *

His views on the matter of the *Trent* were as sound as though he had been trained in diplomacy all his life. "I think," he writes, "the United States Government, notwithstanding this moral and political commitment at Wilkes's act, if it finds that England is in earnest, and that it will have to fight or retract, will retract. We must make up our minds to fight our battles ourselves, expect to receive aid from no one, and make every necessary sacrifice of money, comfort, and labor to bring the war to a successful close. The cry is too much for help. I am mortified to hear it. We want no aid. We want to be true to ourselves, to be prudent, just, and bold." †

The first steps taken at the North were to blockade the Southern ports from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande with the efficient navy of the

* Letters to Mrs. Lee, dated April 30, 1861, and February 8, 1862, Jones's "Lee," p. 150.

† Letter to his son, General G. W. C. Lee, December 29, 1861.

Union, to seize the Mississippi, and to overawe the border States.

The western portion of Virginia, traversed by the great Appalachian Range stretching in a vast barrier across the State, and penetrated only by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, had, partly by reason of the origin and character of the population, partly by reason of their direct association with the North and West, but mainly owing to the absence of slaves among them, been unaffected by the causes which created the friction between the North and South. Here in this mountainous and substantially non-slave-holding region bordering on the States of Ohio and Pennsylvania, and mainly trading by way of the Ohio River and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad with the North and West, the population was almost as strongly Union in sentiment as that of the States with which they marched, and, finally, when the conflict came, the major portion of the population sided with the North and stood for the Union.

The importance of securing this great western section of the leading Southern State was manifest to both sides, and, from the first, troops were thrown into the State by both sides to control and hold it. General Robert S. Garnett had been

early despatched with a command to protect the western border and awe into submission the wavering and the disaffected. He was a Virginian and had served with distinction in the Mexican War, and on his resignation from the army on the outbreak of the war had been assigned to duty as adjutant-general of the Virginian troops, and later had been commissioned a general of the Confederate army. Opposed to Garnett in Western Virginia was a general who was soon to become the hope and main-stay of the government at Washington, and the idol of the Union army, George B. McClellan. He was Garnett's junior by several years, and had graduated at West Point in 1846 in the same class with Stonewall Jackson and A. E. Burnside. He had been assigned to the Engineers, and after achieving distinction in Mexico had resigned from the army to enter civil life. He was engaged in Ohio as an engineer at the outbreak of the war, and having promptly offered his services to the Governor of Ohio, and been appointed major-general of Ohio volunteers, had shown marked capacity in organizing and forwarding troops. He had now been placed in command of the Department of the Ohio, and recognizing the importance of seizing and holding the mountain region of Virginia, he

had on the 26th of May, without waiting for orders, crossed the Ohio River and thrown troops over into that section.* The fruits of this early occupation were so apparent, and his services were so efficient, that he soon secured the confidence of the government at Washington, and later was advanced to the highest command. Pushing forward now into the heart of this Union section of Virginia, and outflanking Garnett, who occupied, with a force of some 5,000 men, a position at Laurel Hill, on the turnpike leading to the county seat of Randolph County, he forced Garnett from his position, cut off and captured on July 12 a portion of his force, posted on Rich Mountain, consisting of about 560 men, under Lieutenant-Colonel Pegram, and following up his advantage with rapidity, overtook Garnett at Carrick's Ford, on the main branch of Cheat River. In the fight which ensued Garnett was killed and his command routed. The course of events had made the eastern rather than the western border of this section the seat of operations, with Harper's Ferry, or more properly Winchester, as the key to the situation, and when Harper's Ferry, on the advance of Patterson, soon after the first outbreak of war, fell into the hands of the Federal

* "McClellan's Own Story."

troops, McClellan had seized the passes that commanded the western region and fortified them strongly. McClellan's rapidity of movement in this campaign, aided possibly by his Napoleonic style of congratulation to his army, beginning, "Soldiers, I am more than satisfied with you," gained him the sobriquet of "The Little Napoleon." Two circumstances were noted at the time, and later became conspicuous in the light of subsequent events: he over-estimated the force opposed to him at more than double its actual strength, and General Scott, in expressing how "charmed the general-in-chief, the Cabinet, and the President were with his activity and valor," declared that they did not mean "to precipitate him, as he was fast enough." The irony of fate at times is curious. This despatch of Scott's bore the same date with Lee's letter expressing regret that he could not be in the field. We shall see what a year was to bring forth.

McClellan, outmatching the commands and the commanders opposed to him, had thus soon showed substantial success for the Union side. Scott had hitherto commanded the armies of the Union, but as a younger man was needed for such onerous service, on the 1st of November, 1861, General George B. McClellan was appointed to the chief command.

Possibly, the fact that Scott was a Virginian had something to do with the decision, as it almost certainly had to do with the passing by of Thomas in the earlier stages of the war; the latter's name not even having been mentioned in the President's congratulatory order on the victory of Mills Springs, which Thomas had won in Kentucky. It is said that Mr. Lincoln, in reply to criticism of the omission, said: "He is a Virginian; let him wait." *

The day after the battle of Manassas, McClellan was telegraphed from Washington that his presence there was necessary, and on his arrival, he was promptly assigned to the command of the Department of Washington and North-eastern Virginia, while Rosecrans succeeded to the command in Western Virginia. Rosecrans, having thus succeeded to the command of the troops despatched to hold Western Virginia, was now leading an invading force up the Kanawha, while Reynolds was posted on the Cheat River to guard the chief avenue of communication between the East and the West.

The Confederate forces in this mountainous region were divided into several detachments. Two of them were on the Kanawha under command,

* "Life of George H. Thomas," by Thomas B. Van Horn, p. 56. Ropes's "Story of the War," I, p. 209, n.

respectively, of Generals Floyd and Wise, who had raised brigades and were both very popular with the Virginians, John B. Floyd having been Secretary of War in President Buchanan's Cabinet, and Henry A. Wise having been Governor of Virginia. And two others were farther eastward under Generals Loring and H. R. Jackson. Among these commanders the spirit of co-operation left much to be desired. Owing partly to the hostility of the population and partly to the lack of harmony among the commanding officers, the cause of the South steadily waned in this trans-Alleghany region, and in July it had become manifest that a soldier of rank and experience must be sent to Western Virginia, unless it was to be lost permanently to the South. After Johnston had been offered the command in this territory and had declined the billet, General Lee, who was ready to go anywhere, was sent out to Western Virginia to take command of the somewhat disorganized forces in that hostile region.

Lee left Richmond for Western Virginia on the same day (July 28) that McClellan, called from that region, took command at Washington of the army designed to capture Richmond. It was Lee's first opportunity to serve in the field. His own letters from Western Virginia throw a light

not only on the situation there, but on his character.

On his arrival he wrote to his wife, giving an idea of his surroundings and a hint of the difficulties by which he found himself confronted. He says: "I reached here yesterday to visit this portion of the army. The points from which we can be attacked are numerous, and the enemy's means unlimited, so we must always be on the alert. It is so difficult to get our people, unaccustomed to the necessities of war, to comprehend and promptly execute the measures required for the occasion. General Johnson, of Georgia, commands on the Monterey line, General Loring on this line, and General Wise, supported by General Floyd, on the Kanawha line. The soldiers everywhere are sick. The measles are prevalent throughout the whole army. You know that disease leaves unpleasant results and attacks the lungs, etc., especially in camp, where the accommodations for the sick are poor. I travelled from Staunton on horseback. A part of the road I travelled over in the summer of 1840 on my return to St. Louis, after bringing you home. If any one had told me that the next time I travelled that road would have been my present errand, I should have supposed him insane. I

enjoyed the mountains as I rode along. The views were magnificent. The valleys so peaceful, the scenery so beautiful. What a glorious world Almighty God has given us! How thankless and ungrateful we are!" *

And from Valley Mountain, August 9, 1861, he writes: "I have been three days coming from Monterey to Huntersville. The mountains are beautiful, fertile to the tops, covered with the richest sward and blue grass and white clover. The enclosed fields wave with a natural growth of timothy. This is a magnificent grazing country, and all it wants is labor to clear the mountain sides of timber. It has rained, I believe, some portion of every day since I left Staunton. Now it is pouring. Colonel Washington, Captain Taylor, and myself are in one tent, which as yet protects us. I have enjoyed the company of our son while I have been here. He is very well and very active, and as yet the war has not reduced him much. He dined with me yesterday and preserves his fine appetite. To-day he is out reconnoitring, and has the full benefit of this fine rain. I fear he is without his overcoat, as I do not recollect seeing it on his saddle. I told you he had been promoted to a major in the cavalry, and he is the

* Letter, dated August 4, 1861.

commanding cavalry officer on this line at present. He is sanguine, cheerful, and hearty as ever. I sent him some cornmeal this morning, and he sent me some butter—a mutual exchange of good things. The men are suffering from measles and so on, as elsewhere, but are cheerful and light-hearted. The nights are cool and the water delicious. Send word to Miss Lou Washington that her father is sitting on his blanket sewing a strap on his haversack. I think she ought to be here to do it."

His reputation, gained among the mountains of Mexico, was doubtless one of the motives which ruled when he was assigned to duty among the mountains of Western Virginia; but even his abilities were not equal to conquering the conditions which he found prevailing there. Three small forces were occupying this region on behalf of the South, each dignified by the title of an army. But the generals would not take orders from each other, and two of them were bitterly hostile. When Lee arrived he found one army posted on the crest of a mountain and the other at its base, and though the enemy was close at hand, neither general would yield to the other. Lee considered the position selected by General Wise on the crest as the better of the two, and united the two forces

there. But the quarrel between the two generals could not be made up, and as General Floyd ranked Wise, the latter had to be relieved and transferred elsewhere. Old soldiers who have discussed the causes of the result of this campaign have never given wholly satisfactory reasons for it, but have felt assured that all that could have been accomplished Lee accomplished. They have felt that in the first place the dissensions of the officers previously in command had tended to demoralize the troops; then, that the sickness among the troops, unaccustomed to the exposure or prostrated by an epidemic of typhoid fever, measles, and other diseases, impaired their efficiency, and finally, that the unlooked-for hostility of the population at large in a region where it was difficult at best to maintain lines of communication, now, in a season unprecedentedly wet, which rendered the roads impassable, combined with lack of means of transportation to frustrate the plans of even so capable a commander as Lee. Lee himself referred to it later as "a forlorn hope." On September 1, Lee writes Mrs. Lee, giving a hint of his difficulties: "We have had a great deal of sickness among the soldiers, and those now on the sick-list would form an army. The measles is still among them, but I hope is dying out. The

constant cold rains, mud, etc., with no shelter or tents, have aggravated it. All these drawbacks, with impassable roads, have paralyzed our efforts."

Lee's report makes mention of the difficulty of maintaining his lines of communication, owing to the exhausted condition of his horses and the impossibility of obtaining supplies; so it may be assumed that this was in his view the chief reason for the failure of the campaign.

The first object of Lee's offensive operations was the destruction of Reynolds, posted in a strong position on the summit of Cheat Mountain, commanding the pass and the important roads which led from the west to the Valley of Virginia. The latter's force was estimated in all at about 10,000 men, while Lee had about 6,000. It was necessary to dislodge him, and as his position at the pass was too well fortified to be assaulted in front, Lee determined, after a personal reconnoissance, to dislodge him by crossing the mountain and attacking him in the rear. Dispositions were accordingly made for this purpose. A body of troops were crossed over the mountain by a trail which had been discovered. The movement, however, proved a failure, because the attack on the fortified position on Cheat Mountain, which was to be the signal for the assault

intended to be made by the body of troops sent by night across the mountains to attack Reynolds's position in the rear, was not made as ordered by Lee. And the flanking force, having had their ammunition damaged and their provisions destroyed by a furious storm, which raged all night, missing the concerted signal, returned across the mountains without making the expected assault. If any one else was to blame for this failure to carry out Lee's well-conceived plan, the commander, bitterly disappointed as he was, with the magnanimity characteristic of him, simply passed it by, as he later did similar failures on the part of his subordinates, assuming himself whatever blame attached to the failure. In a letter to Mrs. Lee, dated Valley Mountain, September 17, 1861, the general expressed his disappointment: "I had hoped to have surprised the enemy's works on the morning of the 12th, both at Cheat Mountain and on Valley River. All the attacking parties with great labor had reached their destination, over mountains considered impassable to bodies of troops, notwithstanding the heavy storm that had set in the day before and raged all night, in which they had to stand till daylight; their arms were then unserviceable and they in poor condition for a fierce assault. After

waiting till ten o'clock for the assault on Cheat Mountain, which did not take place, and which was to be the signal for the rest, they were withdrawn, and after waiting three days in front of the enemy, hoping he would come out of his trenches, we returned to our position at this place. I cannot tell you my regret and mortification at the untoward events that caused the failure of the plan. I had taken every precaution to insure success, and counted on it; but the Ruler of the universe willed otherwise, and sent the storm to disconcert the well-laid plan. We are no worse off now than before, except the disclosure of our plan, against which they will guard. We met with one heavy loss which grieves me deeply: Colonel Washington accompanied Fitzhugh [his son] on a reconnoitring expedition. I fear they were carried away by their zeal and approached within the enemy's pickets. The first they knew there was a volley from a concealed party within a few yards of them. Three balls passed through the Colonel's body, three struck his horse, and the horse of one of the men was killed. Fitzhugh mounted the Colonel's horse and brought him off. I am much grieved. He was always anxious to go on these expeditions. This was the first day I assented. Since I had been thrown in such im-

mediate relations with him, I had learned to appreciate him very highly. Morning and evening have I seen him on his knees praying to his Maker. 'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; the merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.' May God have mercy on us all."

And again on the 26th of the same month he writes from his camp on Sewell Mountain: "I told you of the death of Colonel Washington. I grieve for his loss, though I trust him to the mercy of our heavenly Father. It is raining heavily. The men are all exposed on the mountains, with the enemy opposite to us. We are without tents, and for two nights I have lain buttoned up in my overcoat. To-day my tent came up, and I am in it, yet I fear I shall not sleep for thinking of the poor men. I have no doubt the socks you mentioned will be very acceptable to the men here and elsewhere. If you can send them here I will distribute to the most needy."

In a private letter to Governor Letcher, dated September 17, 1861, he makes no mention of his personal disappointment; that was for his wife alone. He simply states that "he was sanguine of success in attacking the enemy's works on Rich

Mountain"; that "the troops intended for the surprise had reached their destination, having traversed twenty miles of steep and rugged mountain paths, and the last day through a terrible storm, which had lasted all night, in which they had to stand, drenched to the skin, in a cold rain"; that he "waited for an attack on Cheat Mountain, which was to be the signal, till 10 A. M., but the signal did not come. The chance for surprise was gone. The provisions of the men had been destroyed the preceding day by the storm. They had nothing to eat that morning, and could not hold out another day, and were obliged to be withdrawn. This, Governor," he writes, "is for your own eye. Please do not speak of it; we must try again. Our greatest loss is the death of my dear friend, Colonel Washington. He and my son were reconnoitring the front of the enemy. They came afterward upon a concealed party, who fired upon them within twenty yards, and the Colonel fell, pierced by three balls. My son's horse received three shots, but he escaped on the Colonel's horse. His zeal for the cause to which he had devoted himself carried him too far."

The second opportunity which apparently offered itself and was allowed by Lee to pass fruitlessly by was when Rosecrans's army, which lay

before him at Sewell Mountain, was allowed to slip away unmolested.

Reynolds having refused to be drawn out of his position, Lee turned his attention to the western section in the hope of destroying Rosecrans, and leaving General H. R. Jackson to hold Reynolds if possible, Lee addressed himself to the situation in the Kanawha Valley. Riding through the mountains, "attended by a single subaltern," he visited the commands of Generals Floyd and Wise, whose rivalries threatened the destruction of both commands. His object was to put an end to their strife, bring them together, and get from their united forces the power to crush Rosecrans, who was stronger than either. Nothing could be in greater contrast than the long, heated letters of the two subordinates, and the brief, calm replies of the trained, equable-tempered, well-poised Lee.

Rosecrans lay on top of Sewell Mountain, in a strongly fortified position, and Lee posted himself on the opposite crest, expecting that Rosecrans would attack him. Rosecrans, however, after threatening to attack, suddenly withdrew his army by night. Lee gave as his reason for his apparent non-action, that he was confident of defeating Rosecrans by a flanking movement which he had planned for the following night, and

that he "could not afford to sacrifice five or six hundred of his people to silence public clamor." In a letter to his wife, dated October 7, from Sewell Mountain, Lee gives an insight into his views, and incidentally touches on the part that politics was playing in the Southern army. He says: "The enemy was threatening an attack, which was continued till Saturday night, when, under cover of darkness and our usual mountain mist, he suddenly withdrew. Your letter, with the socks, was handed to me when I was preparing to follow. I could not at the time attend to either, but I have since; and as I found Perry [his colored servant from Arlington] in desperate need, I bestowed a couple of pairs on him as a present from you; the others I have put in my trunk, and suppose they will fall to the lot of Meredith [a colored servant from the White House], into the state of whose hose I have not yet inquired. Should any sick man require them first he shall have them, but Meredith will have no one near to supply him but me, and will naturally expect that attention. The water is almost as bad here as in the mountains I left. There was a drenching rain yesterday, and as I left my overcoat in camp, I was thoroughly wet from head to foot. It has been raining ever since, and is now

coming down with a will; but I have my clothes out on the bushes, and they will be well washed. The force of the enemy, estimated by prisoners captured, is put down at from 17,000 to 20,000—General Floyd thinks 18,000. I do not think it exceeds 9,000 or 10,000, but it exceeds ours. I wish he had attacked, as I believe he would have been repulsed with great loss. The rumbling of his wheels, etc., was heard by our pickets; but as that was customary at night in moving and placing his cannon, the officer of the day, to whom it was reported, paid no particular attention to it, supposing it to be a preparation for an attack in the morning. When day appeared the bird had flown, and the misfortune was that the reduced condition of our horses for want of provender, exposure to cold rains in these mountains, and want of provisions for the men prevented the vigorous pursuit of following up that had been prepared. We can only get up provisions from day to day, which paralyzes our operations. I am sorry, as you say, that the movements of the armies cannot keep pace with the expectations of the editors of papers. I know they can regulate matters satisfactory to themselves on paper. I wish they could do so in the field. No one wishes them more success than I do, and would be happy to

see them have full swing. General Floyd has three editors on his staff. I hope something will be done to please them."

When it was all over in Western Virginia, one of his officers, who had been with him there (General Starke), asked Lee why he had not fought Rosecrans, as the forces were about equal, and the Confederates were ready and anxious for a fight, and felt certain of a victory. Lee's reply was that while his men were in good spirits, and would doubtless have done their duty, a battle then would have been without substantial results, owing to their being seventy miles from the railroad, their base of supplies, with the ordinary roads almost impassable, and that "if he had fought and won the battle and Rosecrans had retreated, he would have been compelled to fall back at last to the source of supplies."

"But," said General Starke, "your reputation was suffering, the press was denouncing you, your own State was losing confidence in you, and the army needed a victory to add to its enthusiasm."

To this Lee replied, with a smile: "I could not afford to sacrifice the lives of five or six hundred of my people to silence public clamor."

The "public clamor" over Lee's failure was bitter and persistent, but he remained unruffled

by it. With characteristic calm he simply stated that it was "only natural that such hasty conclusions should be reached," and gave his opinion that it was "better not to attempt a justification or defence, but to go steadily on in the discharge of our duty to the best of our ability, leaving all else to the calmer judgment of the future, and to a kind Providence." Long afterward, Mr. Davis wrote how, when "Lee was unjustly criticised for that campaign," he "magnanimously declined to make an official report, which would have exonerated himself by throwing the responsibility of the failure upon others."* This would have been alien to Lee's nature. All through the war he assumed the responsibility, even when, as at Gettysburg, his orders were not carried out, and the failure was manifestly due to others. He had no editors on his staff. Indeed, at this period he had only two aides-de-camp, Colonel Washington and Colonel Taylor, of whom the former was, as has been stated, killed in a reconnoissance on Cheat Mountain. Thus fell the last of the name who owned Mount Vernon.

The first campaign in which Lee engaged was thus, like Washington's first campaign, conducted with adverse fortune. Had Washington's mili-

* Taylor's "Lee," p. 47.

tary career closed after the retreat from Long Island, he would have been reckoned simply a brave man and a stark fighter, but one unequal to general command. Had Lee's career ended after the campaign in Western Virginia, when he was derisively characterized in the anti-administration press of Richmond as "Evacuating Lee," he would have been known in history only as a fine organizer, a capital scout, and a brilliant engineer of unusual gallantry whose abilities as a commander were not superior to those of the mediocre officer who opposed him in that experimental campaign, and were possibly equal only to the command of a brigade or, at best, of a division. But the South and fame awaited his opportunity.

Happily for the South, Mr. Davis knew Lee better than those who were so clamorous against him, and the autumn having closed the campaign in Western Virginia, and the sea cities along the Atlantic coast sorely needing protection from the blockading fleet, Lee was despatched to the South to design and construct a general system of coast-defences along the Atlantic seaboard. It must have irked him, with his clear vision of the outlook, to have been relegated for months to the seacoast of the Carolinas to work among the bayous and swamps—making bricks without

straw—while the enemy not only swept the Southwest, but got together a great army to move on Richmond. But though he spoke privately of it as "another forlorn hope like that in Western Virginia," no hint to the outside world escaped him. He was doing his duty. And whatever he may have thought of the task, it was one in which he displayed such genius that he rendered the coast cities of Georgia and South Carolina impregnable against all assaults by sea. Protected by his chain of forts, they stood as memorials of his genius until Sherman, with his victorious army, attacked them by land.

"It must be admitted," says Fitz Lee, in his "Life of Lee," "that General Lee retired from Western Virginia with diminished military reputation." This is far from a complete statement of the feeling as to him at this time. He was charged with incompetence, with being "too tender to shed blood," and with "impressing with a showy presence" and "an historic name" rather than with soldierly qualities. When he was assigned to duty in the South, a protest was made against his being sent there. Mr. Davis felt it necessary to write to the Governor of South Carolina, defending his assignment. He declared: "If General Lee is not a general, I have none to send

you." To all of this Lee made no reply. He simply proceeded with his duty, and amid the swamps of South Carolina and Georgia, labored for four months with a zeal which could not have been excelled had he commanded an army.

The Hon. Alexander H. Stephens gives a picture of Lee at this time. He says:

"The Confederate Government had adopted the plan of Austria, at the period when Napoleon the First so nearly wiped her off the map of Europe, and endeavored to 'cover everything' with the armies. The army at Centreville was little more than a mob clamoring for leave of absence, and with seldom a day's rations ahead, and General Lee was sent to repair the disasters of Hilton Head and Beaufort, S. C., by the impossible task of engineering sufficient fortifications for a thousand miles of mingled sea-coast and inland swamps. I remember seeing him in Savannah, conspicuous by the blue uniform which he was the last of the Confederates to put off, scarcely noticed among the gray uniforms of the new volunteers, and the least likely of all men to become the first character in the war for States' Rights."

His letters give a clear picture of the difficulties of protecting these seaport towns against a navy without some sort of navy to oppose it. On Feb-

ruary 8, 1862, he writes his wife from Savannah: "I wrote you the day I left Coosawhatchie. I have been here ever since, endeavoring to push forward the works for the defence of the city. Guns are scarce, as well as ammunition. I shall have to bring up batteries from the coast, I fear, to provide for this city. Our enemies are trying to work their way through the creeks and soft marshes along the interior of the coast, which communicate with the sounds and sea, through which the Savannah flows, and thus avoid the entrance to the river, commanded by Fort Pulaski. Their boats require only seven feet of water to float them, and the tide rises seven feet, so that at high water they can work their way and rest on the mud at low. I hope, however, we shall be able to stop them, and my daily prayer to the Giver of all victory is to enable us to do so. We must make up our minds to meet with reverses and overcome them. But the contest must be long, and the whole country has to go through much suffering. It is necessary we should be humble and taught to be less boastful, less selfish, and more devoted to right and justice to all the world."

And again from the same place he says, on February 23: "The news from Tennessee and

North Carolina is not at all cheering. Disasters seem to be thickening around us. It calls for renewed energies and redoubled strength on our part. I fear our soldiers have not realized the necessity of endurance and labor, and that it is better to sacrifice themselves for our cause. God, I hope, will shield us and give us success. I hear the enemy is progressing slowly in his designs. His gunboats are pushing up all the creeks and marshes to the Savannah, and have obtained a position so near the river as to shell the steamers navigating it. I am engaged in constructing a line of defence at Fort Jackson, which, if time permits, and guns can be obtained, I hope will keep them out."

As McClellan prepared to move on Richmond with the great army which he had been organizing and equipping all winter, so threatening became the situation there, and so deep an impression had Lee's work in preparing the defences of the Southern States made on the people, that they began to look to him once more, and later the Confederate Congress passed an act creating the office of commander-in-chief for him. This act President Davis vetoed as unconstitutional, he, himself, by the constitution, being the commander-in-chief of the naval and military forces of the

Confederate States. He, however, recalled Lee to Richmond, and on March 13, 1862, issued the following order:

"General Robert E. Lee is assigned to duty at the seat of government, and, under the direction of the President, is charged with the conduct of the military operations in the armies of the Confederacy."

Mr. Stephens's comment on this is that "again he had a barren though difficult honor thrust upon him."

Mr. Davis, on the other hand, declared that when General Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia, he was in command of all the armies of the Confederate States by his order of assignment, and that Lee continued in this general command of the Army of Northern Virginia as long as he would resist Lee's opinion that it was necessary for him to be relieved of one of these two duties. But it is manifest that Lee was "under the direction of the President."

Mr. Stephens states that he did much to improve the army as chief of staff under Mr. Davis, and was nominally head of the army, but soon asked to be relieved from responsibility with no power. During this period, however, his great engineering abilities were exercised to prepare the

defences of Richmond against the coming storm. And among other benefits that the Confederate capital now derived from his labors were the works at Drewry's and Chaffin's Bluffs, on the James, to which were due, not long afterward, the repulse of the Federal gunboats, and the preservation of the city when, on Johnston's retiring up the Peninsula in May, Norfolk was abandoned, and the James was thrown open to the Federal fleet. But for this work of Lee's, Richmond might have become untenable before McClellan crossed the Chickahominy.

Thus Lee, in the shadow of the vast preparations making at Washington for a great invasion of Virginia, was, in March, 1862, called back to Richmond, to advise the President of the Confederacy. The need was urgent, for a few weeks later McClellan, with Johnston falling back slowly before him, was marching steadily up the Peninsula, with an army the like of which had never been commanded by one man.

As soon as Lee was brought back from the South, he revolutionized the plan of campaign hitherto followed. The South was already being shut in and throttled. Her sea-coast cities were being captured, her ports blockaded, and her country cut in two. His clear vision saw the im-

perative necessity of substituting an aggressive for a defensive policy, and he unleashed the eager Jackson on the armies in the Valley of Virginia, keeping them fully occupied, and so alarming Washington as to hold McDowell on the north side of the Rappahannock and withhold his 40,000 men from swelling McClellan's already powerful army on the Peninsula. Within a month after he was placed in actual command he perfected his plans and fell upon McClellan, and defeated the greatest army that had ever stood on American soil. The next three years proved beyond cavil that in the first campaign, as always, all that could have been done with his forces by any one was done by Lee. Within one year, indeed, he had laid the foundation of a fame as a great captain as enduring as Marlborough's or Wellington's.

Three years from this time "this colonel of cavalry" surrendered a muster-roll of 26,000 men, of which barely 8,000 muskets showed up, to an army of over 130,000 men, commanded by the most determined and able general that the North had found, and, defeated, sheathed his sword with what will undoubtedly become the reputation of the first captain and the noblest public character of his time.

In this period he had fought three of the great-

est campaigns in all the history of war, and had destroyed the reputation of more generals than any captain had ever done in the same space of time. His last campaign alone, even ending as it did in defeat, would have sufficed to fix him forever as a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of great captains. Though he succumbed at last to the "policy of attrition," pursued by his patient and able antagonist, it was not until Grant had lost in the campaign over 124,000 men, better armed and equipped—two men for every one that Lee had had in his army from the beginning of the campaign.

## VI

### THE SITUATION WHEN LEE TOOK COMMAND

WHEN McClellan moved on Richmond, the fortunes of the South appeared to be at a lower ebb than they ever were again until the winter of 1864. The long period since the victory of Manassas had been allowed to pass without any such active operations as would keep at white heat the flame of enthusiasm which preceded that event. The government of the Confederacy held to the doctrine that the war was one solely defensive. With even more disastrous reasoning, if possible, it put in practice another theory, that a democratic army should elect its officers. In the spring of 1862, a general election was, by direction of the government, held by the Confederate army, then lying in the face of the enemy, by which all officers from colonel down were voted for by the men of the various commands. Such a measure was wholly destructive of discipline, and Lee, in one of his letters, refers to being in the midst of "the fermentation" due to the reorganization of the army.

The general plan for prosecution of the war on the part of the North was the same that had been laid down at the beginning: that is, to hold the border States, to blockade the Southern ports and attack by sea, and to seize the navigable rivers running far up into her territory, especially the Mississippi, and thereby cut the South in two. By the end of spring, 1862, nearly the whole of this far-reaching and sagacious plan had been measurably accomplished. Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky had been held firmly, and in all three States, except Missouri, secession had been forcibly prevented, while Missouri had been substantially conquered.

The possession of a fleet gave to the Union forces the command of the Chesapeake, of the Potomac, of the York, and (after the sinking of the *Merrimac* by her commander) of the James, to within less than half a day's march of Richmond. This was quickly followed by an attempt on Richmond by the Federal fleet, which General Johnston declared a greater danger than the Federal army. The fleet, under Commodore John Rodgers, consisting of the *Monitor*, the *Galena*, and three other gunboats, ascended the James to within eight miles of Richmond, but were, on May 15, repulsed by the batteries at Drewry's

Bluff, where Lee had hastily constructed works which stood till abandoned, on April 2, 1865.

In January, Thomas had won the battle of Mill Springs, in Kentucky, which made the Union forces dominant in that region. In February (6th), Fort Henry, on the Tennessee, had been captured, and four days later (the 10th) Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland, had surrendered unconditionally to a general hitherto almost unknown, to whom the government had been inclined to turn the cold shoulder, but who was to become better known thereafter. The gallant Buckner, having refused to escape with the other generals and leave his men, had surrendered with the latter. By these victories the upper Mississippi, the Cumberland, and the Tennessee came into the control of the Federal forces, and all that was needed was to obtain mastery of the lower Mississippi to leave the Confederacy rent in twain. The forts at Hatteras Inlet had been reduced in August (28th). Hilton Head and Beaufort, in North Carolina, had been captured, following Admiral DuPont's reduction of the forts on Port Royal Inlet, and Roanoke Island and Newberne, N. C., had been captured in the first half of March, 1862. On April 6, Albert Sidney Johnston, deemed up till now the South's most brilliant soldier, had

substantially won a battle against the captor of Forts Henry and Donelson, but had been slain in the hour of victory, and that night Buell, having reached the field with fresh troops, the Confederate forces had been in turn defeated. It is probable that but for the fall of Johnston, who bled to death through neglecting his wound in his eagerness to push his victory on the 6th, Grant's fortunate star might have set at Shiloh instead of rising higher and higher in the next three years, to reach its zenith at Appomattox. As it was, the upper Mississippi with its great tributaries was in complete control of the Union, and on April 24, Flag Officer Farragut, himself a Tennessean, with a powerful fleet ran up the Mississippi, successfully passing the forts (Jackson and St. Philip) guarding its mouth, and reached New Orleans, which city was soon occupied by Butler (May 1), its fall being quickly followed by the fall of Pensacola. By this time all the important Florida seaport towns were in the possession of the Federal forces, and all these captures, except Roanoke Island and Newberne, had been effected by the navy.* Thus, the Mississippi was open from its mouth to Port Hudson, and even that fort and the yet more threatening forts at Vicks-

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, pp. 182–5.

burg could be passed by the Federal gunboats, though not without danger, which it was important to put an end to. The main object of attack, however, now was Richmond.

The very next day after the rout at Bull Run, Mr. Lincoln, awakening to the gravity of the situation, had called for 500,000 men, and the North had responded with fervor. Between the 4th of August and the 10th of October more than 110 regiments and 30 battalions, comprising at least 112,000 men, were added to the forces in Washington and its neighborhood.* The ablest organizer in the army had been called to the task of organization, and proved to have a genius for it. All autumn and winter he labored at the work, and when spring came Washington had been strongly fortified, and McClellan found himself at the head of possibly the largest, best equipped, and best drilled army ever commanded by one man in modern times.

Thus, the spring of 1862 had been spent by the government of the United States in preparation for a campaign against Richmond which should retrieve the errors and disasters of the preceding year, and by making certain the capture of Richmond, "the heart of the Confederacy," should

* *Ibid.*, p. 167.

end the war by one great and decisive stroke. The new Federal commander proved in the sequel not to be as great a fighter as, at least, one of his successors. But whatever the immediate result was, McClellan taught the North the way to organize and equip a great army. It was well said that without McClellan there had been no Grant. And McClellan had difficulties to contend with in the panic-struck and urgent authorities in Washington which Grant was wise enough to relieve himself of by previous stipulation.

Several plans for attacking Richmond still presented themselves, as at the beginning of hostilities, all of which included the idea of cutting off the city from communication with the south-west. One was by way of the Shenandoah Valley, striking the Virginia Central Railroad at Staunton or Waynesboro, and marching on Richmond by way of Charlottesville, whence a railway line ran to South-west Virginia and Tennessee; one by way of Manassas; one by the Chesapeake Bay and the lower Rappahannock; and finally, one by way of the Chesapeake Bay and the peninsula lying between the York and the James, which presented the opportunity, under certain contingencies, of seizing Petersburg and isolating Richmond from the South.

The practicability of all of these plans of invasion had to be considered quite as carefully in Richmond as in Washington, and the possibility of each one of them being adopted had to be provided against. As the junction at Manassas had proved to be the key to the situation in the first effort, and its use had enabled the valley forces under Joseph E. Johnston to be brought across the Blue Ridge in the nick of time for the final movement in the battle there, so it still remained the most important point in Central Virginia, and Johnston's army was placed there to guard it and at the same time keep Washington in a state of anxiety. The Washington authorities were, for manifest reasons, in favor of trying their fortune again at this point. The armies of Fremont and Banks in the Shenandoah Valley were within a few days' march and might render assistance, and at least it rendered Washington more secure. McClellan, however, favored the route by the Rappahannock. McClellan's first plan was to march to Annapolis, and then transport his army, 140,000 men, to Urbana, on the south bank of the Rappahannock, and "occupy Richmond before it could be strongly reinforced." *

* John C. Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, p. 266, citing McClellan's letter to Stanton (5 W. R., 45).

This plan he was forbidden to adopt, though he considered it the best of all the plans, and he thereupon selected the route by way of Fortress Monroe and the Peninsula, against the views of the government authorities, who greatly desired him to adopt the overland route by Manassas, across which Johnston lay with an army then believed to number over 100,000 men, but really containing certainly less than half that number.* Indeed, it was actually about 35,000 men.

Illness during the autumn and early winter of 1861 prevented McClellan's acting with the efficiency which he might otherwise have shown; but even more disastrous than this was his determination not to move until he had an army sufficiently great and properly organized to make his success assured. For this reason mainly he resisted alike the importunities of the President and the Secretary of War and the clamor of the public until on toward the spring, by which time he had sacrificed the good-will of the former and the confidence of both.

Jackson, acting on a suggestion of Lee's, settled the question of the Shenandoah Valley plan by the battle of Winchester and his brilliant retreat between two converging armies down the valley,

* *Ibid.*

followed by the twin victories of Cross Keys and Port Republic. The authorities in Washington decided against the lower Rappahannock plan, and gave McClellan his choice between the overland route by way of Manassas and the Fortress Monroe plan, and he states that "of course he selected the latter," adding a jibe at the fears of the administration and a suggestion of their disloyalty to him.*

The advantages of the route by the Chesapeake Bay were obvious. The possession of the navy gave the Union Government command of the bay and its navigable tributaries, enabling them to transport troops and munitions of war to a point within a convenient distance of Richmond. The chief objections to the selection of this line lay, first, in the danger of denuding the defences of Washington by withdrawing so large a force while the Confederate army under Johnston lay on the Rapidan and the audacious Jackson was operating in the Shenandoah Valley, and, later on, in the difficulties occasioned by the operations in the Chesapeake of the new floating war machine, the *Virginia*, which, with her awkward armor of railway iron, appeared a sort of Goliath of the sea. The only other serious difficulties were the pres-

*"McClellan's Own Story," p. 227.

ence of the heavy fortifications at Yorktown and Gloucester Point, guarding the mouth of the York River. Still, McClellan had no doubt of being able, with the aid of the navy, to reduce these forts and open the York to the passage of his transports.

This decision was reached by him in the first week of March, and on the 9th of March Johnston, under orders from Mr. Davis, withdrew his army from Manassas and fell back to the Rappahannock, and thence toward Richmond, immediately on which McClellan occupied Manassas with the greater part of his army,* to give them training and with a view to opening the railway from Manassas, where Banks's head-quarters were to be, to Strasburg, in the Shenandoah Valley.

About the middle of March McClellan began to ship his troops to Fortress Monroe, a movement which proceeded so rapidly that by the end of the month he had three corps on the spot, and was "eagerly expecting others"; and Johnston thereupon, "his movements controlled by McClellan," marched to the Peninsula, where Magruder with only some 13,000 men at Yorktown had handled them so ably that McClellan was led to believe his force much larger than it was.

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, p. 225.

General Lee wrote to his wife from Richmond, March 22, 1862: "Our enemies are pressing us everywhere, and our army is in the fermentation of reorganization. I pray that the great God may aid us, and am endeavoring by every means in my power to bring out the troops and hasten them to their destination." General Lee was now military adviser to the President, and thenceforth, though he was till almost the very end of the war "under the direction of the President," and never had a free hand, he had at least a potent hand in the conduct of the military operations of the Confederacy.

Having found his advance up the Peninsula between the York and the James, for the purpose of enveloping Yorktown, barred by the erection of strong works along the line of the Warwick River, extending entirely across the Peninsula, McClellan, instead of assaulting immediately, being under the impression that Magruder was far stronger than he really was, laid siege to Yorktown, and made ready with elaborate preparation to assault on the 5th of May. On the night of the 3d, however, Magruder, acting under the orders of Johnston, who, as stated, on McClellan's landing in Virginia had withdrawn his army from the Rapidan and now commanded in the Peninsula, skil-

fully withdrew his troops and retired on Williamsburg. So that McClellan, who had spent weeks in preparation for the capture, shipping heavy ordnance from the Northern arsenals and engaging the best engineers in the service, found the post abandoned, and got only the abandoned heavy guns which Magruder had been unable to carry off.

Differing from Johnston, Lee's temperament inclined him to more audacious tactics than the Fabian policy which the latter inclined to pursue. He would have had Johnston force the issue on the Rapidan before giving McClellan the opportunity to mass his army on the Peninsula, and now that the latter event had occurred, he was in favor of forwarding troops and delivering battle before he should advance on Richmond.

The advance of McClellan on Richmond with an army of 115,000 men immediately under his command, besides the reserve of 40,000 under McDowell on the Rappahannock, made the Peninsula the field of the most important operations which had yet been attempted, and should they be successfully conducted, they were likely to decide the issue of the war. Opposed to him, under the immediate command of General Johnston, were about 53,000 men, with 18,000 at Norfolk

commanded by General Huger, and something over 16,000 in the valley, making a total of 87,000 men.*

In this exigency, a conference was held in Richmond between the President, the Secretary of War, and General Lee, to which were also invited Major-Generals Smith and Longstreet, to discuss the best method of meeting the situation, whose gravity all recognized.

General Johnston proposed that, without attempting to make a stand on the lower Peninsula along Magruder's line, which would only delay the Federal army in its approach, all the available forces of the Confederacy, including those in the Carolinas and Georgia, with those at Norfolk, should be brought together for an attack on McClellan at the moment he began to besiege Richmond. He believed that such an attack, coming as a surprise to McClellan, "would be almost certain to win, and the enemy, divided a hundred miles away from the Potomac, their place of refuge, could scarcely escape destruction. Such a victory, he urged, would decide not only the campaign, but the war, while the present plan could produce no decisive results."

This plan was opposed, the Secretary of War,

* Johnston's "Narrative," pp. 115, 116.

General Randolph, who had been a naval officer, objecting because it involved "at least the temporary abandonment of Norfolk, which would involve the probable loss of the materials for many vessels of war contained in the navy yard there."

"Lee opposed it," states Johnston, "because he thought that the withdrawal from South Carolina and Georgia of any considerable number of troops would expose the important seaports of Charleston and Savannah to the danger of capture. He thought, too, that the Peninsula had excellent fields of battle for a small army contending with a great one, and that we should for that reason make the contest with McClellan's army there."

"Longstreet," adds Johnston, "owing to his deafness, took little part in the conference."

Longstreet, who states that he and General Smith were invited by General Johnston to accompany him, intimates that he heard quite enough at the conference; that he had a plan of his own, which he intended to suggest, by which he was to join General Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley "with sufficient reinforcements to strike the Federal forces in front of him a sudden, severe blow," cross the Potomac, threaten Washington, and call McClellan to his own capital.

This plan, he states, he had proposed to Jackson a few days before.

On prefacing his views, however, with the statement that he knew General McClellan, "that he was a military engineer, and would move his army by careful measurement and preparation, and that he would not be ready to advance before the 1st of May, the President interrupted and spoke of McClellan's high attainments and capacity in a style indicating that he did not care to hear any one talk who did not have the same appreciation of our great adversary." And he adds that, "remembering that McClellan had been a special favorite with Mr. Davis when he was Secretary of War in the Pierce administration, and Mr. Davis appearing to take such reflections upon his favorites as somewhat personal, he concluded that his opinion had only been asked through recognition of his presence, not that it was wanted, and said no more." *

Singularly enough, Longstreet makes no mention of General Lee's taking any part in the conference. The interesting fact, however, is established by General Long, that Lee was for fighting McClellan on the Peninsula, on one of "the excellent fields of battle for a small army

*Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox," p. 66.

contending with a great one." "The President," continues Johnston in his narrative, "decided in favor of the opinion of General Lee, and ordered General Johnston to take command of the Army of the Peninsula, adding the departments of Norfolk and the Peninsula to that of Northern Virginia."

General Johnston assumed his new command on the 17th of April, and proceeded to finish the works begun by Magruder along the line of the Warwick River.

Lee's views, however, were not adopted, and though Johnston had placed his army between McClellan and Richmond, the advance on the Confederate capital was steady and disheartening. A sharp battle was fought at Williamsburg, the ancient capital of the Old Dominion, in which, as very often occurred, both sides claimed the advantage; but if Napoleon's dictum be sound, that that side is to be deemed the victor which is able to advance first, the balance was in favor of the Union arms, even though they lost more men and five guns. The true advantage to the Confederates was that they were able, against McClellan's earnest efforts, to bring off the garrisons of the forts at the mouth of the York, extricate their trains, and retire leisurely up the Peninsula to

the defensive position behind the Chickahominy, in the neighborhood of Richmond. The evacuation, however, of Yorktown and the withdrawal of Johnston's army necessitated the evacuation of Norfolk and Portsmouth.

The iron-clad *Virginia*—the old *Merrimac*, by which latter name she was, and doubtless will continue to be, better known—being unable to take the seas, partly because of her slow rate of speed, which prevented her passing the Federal batteries at the mouth of Hampton Roads, and yet more because of her inability to secure coal and other stores, and being unable because of her heavy draught to go up the James, was, on the 11th of May, sunk by her commander, Commodore Tatnall. Thus, the James as well as the York was thenceforth open to the Federal gunboats and transports as far up as Drewry's Bluff, a high point commanding the narrows of the James, only seven or eight miles below Richmond.

Thus, as the spring closed while the fortunes of the South had waned lamentably in the Southwest, the Confederate capital was menaced by an army which had forced its way up the Peninsula and was believed to be capable of taking Richmond whenever its general saw fit to deliver his assault. Feeling sure of it, McClellan approached

leisurely up the north bank of the Chickahominy and entrenched his army in the positions he secured from time to time, until he was within sight of the spires of Richmond, and on quiet nights his pickets could hear the sound of the city's bells pealing the hours. It was believed by many that Richmond was doomed, and there was even discussion of moving the seat of government to a more secure capital in the South. The situation was grave, indeed. McDowell, with 40,000 men, was at Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock, but sixty miles away, and was under stringent orders to effect a junction with McClellan, who, to get in touch with him and protect his base at West Point on the York, had reached out on the north side of the Chickahominy as far as Hanover Court House and the North Anna. Two armies, one under Banks in the Valley of Virginia and the other under Fremont to the westward, were keeping Stonewall Jackson so fully engaged that he was making marches which gained for his infantry the appellation of "foot cavalry," and to hold his own he was forced to win two battles on two successive days. It is no wonder that the Confederate authorities should have regarded the situation with deep concern—even Mr. Davis, habitually so sanguine, speaking of "the

drooping cause of our country" *—and that the Union authorities should have been correspondingly elated. Richmond, apparently to the latter, lay almost at the mercy of the overwhelming army which McClellan had organized and brought to her gates. The only bright spot on the horizon was the Shenandoah Valley, where Stonewall Jackson, unleashed by Lee, was with his gallant little army showing amazing results, and by his "terrifying swiftness" and unexpected genius was keeping Washington in a panic, and withholding from McClellan's aid the forces under McDowell, Fremont, Milroy, Banks, and Shields, fully eight times the number of men in his own command. He recognized the necessity of making such a show of force in the Shenandoah Valley to the westward of Washington as would hold the Union forces there for the defence of Washington.

It had been the plan of McClellan to have McDowell join him on the Peninsula with his corps, which would have brought his force before Richmond up to some 150,000 men, and it had been the intention of the government at Washington to permit this plan to be carried out. They insisted, however, that McDowell, instead of going

* Letter to General Joseph E. Johnston, May 11, 1862. (Ropes, II, p. 114.)

by water, should advance across country along the line of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railway, and join McClellan in the lowlands of Hanover, thus keeping his forces in touch with Washington. The 26th of May was set for his advance; but on the afternoon of that very day, owing to Jackson's "rapid and terrifying movements" in the valley of the Shenandoah, this order was, to the "amazement and regret" of both McDowell and McClellan, "suspended," and McDowell was ordered to send 20,000 men directly to the valley to aid in the capture of Jackson. The plan appeared feasible enough to civilians and office soldiers, but, as already stated, was frustrated by Jackson's brilliant extraction of his forces by his famous retreat from the Potomac to Strasburg, between the enemy's converging armies, and the subsequent victories of Cross Keys and Port Republic on June 8 and 9.

The retirement of the Confederate forces on Richmond had enabled McClellan to proceed up the York to West Point, where the Mattapony and the Pamunkey Rivers join, forming the York. Here he established his base of supplies, and by a singular coincidence he established his head-quarters at "The White House," a plantation belonging to General Lee. From this point he pushed

his advance forward toward Richmond, occupying the country lying to the northward of Richmond, and throwing his left, consisting of the Third and Fourth Corps, under Heintzelman and Keyes, across the Chickahominy, a small, sluggish river that flows south-westerly into the James through a wide, marshy bottom, densely timbered, and often broken into a number of channels. Uplands rise on both sides of the stream, and it is crossed only by the bridges on the roads to Richmond. The Fifth Corps remained on the northern side of the Chickahominy, guarding the line of communication with the York.

Thus, McClellan's forces were divided by a stream which, although apparently insignificant during dry weather, was, when swollen by rains, a factor to be seriously reckoned with.

In view of this division of his troops, Johnston had determined to attack him before any reinforcements could reach him from Fredericksburg, where McDowell lay with his 40,000 men, prepared to aid McClellan before Richmond, or Fremont in the Valley of the Shenandoah, as need required.

It was a region to which both commanders had looked forward as a probable battle-ground—a generally level country, intersected by an occa-

sional ravine or swamp, often heavily wooded, where some tributary creek had worn its way deep through the alluvial soil, spreading out in the bottoms with impenetrable thickets. But McClellan had not reckoned on the division of his army, which now left three of his corps (the Second, Fifth, and Sixth) on the north of the Chickahominy, while two (the Third and Fourth) were on the south of the stream. To meet this situation he took measures to establish partially a second base at Harrison's Landing, on the James, to which was due later on the preservation of his army.

Through this region three roads ran from Richmond eastwardly, and substantially parallel to the James, known respectively as the Nine Mile Road, one fork of which ran to New Bridge, on the Chickahominy, the other to Fair Oaks Station, on the Richmond and York River Railroad; the Williamsburg Stage Road; and most southerly of all, the Charles City or River Road.

Johnston had, in face of McClellan's steady advance, and, as stated, somewhat against the views of Lee, fallen back on Richmond, and, finding McClellan's army divided by the swollen Chickahominy, had, on May 31, attacked his left under Keyes at Seven Pines, and driven him back to Fair Oaks, possibly missing a complete victory

only by reason of Longstreet's slowness; then, having been severely wounded, he had been forced to leave the field, and next day a renewal of the attack under General G. W. Smith had resulted in a repulse. In this battle Longstreet was to have charge of the general management of the operations along the New Bridge Road, and was to be assisted by Huger from the Charles City Road. By some error, however, in the orders, which were verbal, or in the understanding of these orders—first, questions arose between the two commanders; and secondly, the orders were not complied with promptly. Longstreet, instead of attacking in the morning by the New Bridge Road, moved to the south-east on the Williamsburg Road, and did not attack until after one o'clock, when, instead of concentrating and destroying, as was expected, Keyes's corps, which was stationed somewhat perilously far in advance of Heintzelman's force, he only defeated it and drove it in, where it was saved by the opportune arrival of Sedgwick's division of Sumner's corps, which had crossed the river at half-past two, and reaching the field at five o'clock, had attacked in flank. Hill's gallant and persistent attack in the early afternoon carried the field; but it was too late to avail of the golden oppor-

tunity that had offered at the beginning of the day, and though it was a victory, and the Confederates captured 10 guns, 6,000 muskets, and 5 colors, besides 347 prisoners,* it was not the decisive victory it should have been, and the enemy was ready to fight again the next morning.

On the eve of Seven Pines, Lee sent Colonel Long, of his staff, with a message to Johnston, "to tell him that he would be glad to participate in the battle." He had no desire to interfere with his command, but simply wished to aid him on the field to the best of his ability, and in any manner in which his services would be of most value. Johnston, thanking him, invited him to ride down to the battle-field, and asked that he send him such reinforcements as he could.†

General Johnston, in command of the operations, was, about sunset, shot out of his saddle and severely wounded, and the general command devolved upon General Gustavus W. Smith. The battle was renewed the following morning by General Smith, who ordered Longstreet "to renew the engagement and to direct his attack toward the north," where lay Richardson's "powerful division" of Sumner's corps, that had crossed the river to the rescue the afternoon before; but

* Ropes, II, pp. 152, 154. † Long's "Lee," p. 158.

Longstreet seems to have believed that the entire Federal army was opposed to him, and to have been afraid of exposing his right flank to the troops of the Fourth Division, who still lay where they had been driven back the evening before. At any rate, he is charged by critics on both sides with having been "singularly lacking in energy and dash," and with "having made no serious effort to carry the Union lines." * Huger's brave brigades, under Armistead and Mahone, made a gallant attack, but were repulsed after hard fighting, and at two o'clock a new commander arrived on the field.

It was in this crisis that Lee was placed in command. Lee had ridden down to the battle-field with President Davis while the fight was in progress, and when the wounding of Johnston was reported to the President, he informed Lee that he wished him to take charge. The next day he issued the order, as follows:

RICHMOND, VA., *June* 1, 1862.

GENERAL R. E. LEE.

*Sir:* The unfortunate casualty which has deprived the army in front of Richmond of its immediate commander, General Johnston, renders it necessary to interfere temporarily with the duties to which you were assigned in connection with the

* Ropes, II, p. 149.

general service, but only so far as to make you available for command in the field of a particular army. You will assume command of the army in Eastern Virginia, and in North Carolina, and give such orders as may be needful and proper.

Very respectfully,

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Lee thereupon issued his first order to the gallant army with which his fame was thenceforth to be so inseparably bound up. It ran:

*Special Orders No.* 22.

HEAD-QUARTERS, RICHMOND, VA.,
*June* 1, 1862.

In pursuance of the orders of the President, General R. E. Lee assumes command of the armies of Eastern Virginia and North Carolina. The unfortunate casualty that has deprived the army in front of Richmond of the valuable services of its able general, is not more deeply deplored by any member of the command than by its present commander. He hopes his absence will be but temporary, and while he will endeavor to the best of his ability to perform his duties, he feels he will be totally inadequate to the task unless he shall receive the cordial support of every officer and man.

By order of General Lee.

W. H. TAYLOR,
*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

The situation at Richmond when, in succession to Johnston, Lee was appointed in command of the Army of Northern Virginia was substantially this: The Confederate troops, lying between Richmond and McClellan's army, numbered about 70,000 men. A steady retreat up the Peninsula had tended to impair their spirit, if not their morale. The single check given to McClellan at Williamsburg had resulted in nothing more practical than to allow time for the retirement on Richmond, and to teach McClellan a wholesome lesson of respect for his enemy. The attack at Seven Pines, on the afternoon of May 31, had been so gallantly pressed that it had resulted in a victory, but not the complete victory that had been expected. Owing to Longstreet's slowness and, possibly, to his half-heartedness, which led him to wait until the afternoon before making the assault planned for the morning, thereby allowing Sumner to cross the falling Chickahominy and save Keyes, and on the next day led him to attack Sumner with only three brigades instead of with his full force, the victory of the 31st had been followed by the repulse at Fair Oaks next day, when General G. W. Smith commanded. In the same way, a few weeks later, as Henderson points out, he became responsible for the frontal battle of Malvern Hill.

It was characteristic of Lee that, although appointed to supersede General Smith on the 1st of June, he left him in actual command in the battle of that day, only endorsing his orders, and aiding him in bringing reinforcements from the commands of Ripley and Holmes.*

The fortunes of the Confederacy in the West and along the seaboard, as we have seen, were at this time at a low ebb, and McClellan was now apparently sure of the capture of the Confederate capital. Should it fall, Virginia was likely to be overrun by the forces of the Union, and the principal seat of war would be the South or the West. McClellan's army numbered about 110,000 men, now well organized and fairly seasoned; his equipment was as good as the world could furnish, and he believed himself, and was believed to be, a young Napoleon. McDowell's army was at Fredericksburg, only sixty miles away, clamorous to join him and participate in the glory of the capture of the "rebel capital," and under orders to do so, while already, in the Shenandoah Valley, or ready to march thither, was Fremont with 20,000 men, all operating to unite and fall on Richmond.

Such, in brief, was the situation when Lee as-

* Fitz Lee's "Lee," p. 147.

sumed command, on June 1, 1862, and the fate of Richmond was placed in his hands. His prestige at this time was far from being what it soon afterward became, or even what it had been previous to the outbreak of the war. His ability as an engineer was recognized; but the proof of a general is victories, and that proof he had not given.

## VII

### BATTLES AROUND RICHMOND

LEE, thus called from the titular position of military adviser to the President to the command of the army defending Richmond, to take the place of Johnston, found himself in command of about 80,000 men—70,000 of whom were close by.

Longstreet, who was given to being critical of Lee, as of many others, has an interesting account of Lee's action and the impression made by him when he first assumed command of the army which was to be thenceforth associated with his fame. The assignment of General Lee to the command was, he states, "far from reconciling the troops to the loss of their beloved chief, General Joseph E. Johnston, on whom all hearts leaned and whom all loved." "Lee's experience in active field work had been limited to his West Virginia campaign, which was not successful." His services as an engineer had been able and as an engineer he had been "especially distinguished." "But officers of the line," he adds, "are not apt to look to the

staff in choosing leaders of soldiers, either in tactics or strategy."

"During the first week of his authority," he continues, "Lee called his general officers to meet him on the Nine Mile Road for a general talk. This novelty was not reassuring, as experience had told that secrecy in war was an essential element of success; that public discussion and secrecy were incompatible."

They met, and the generals talked. But as they rode homeward, it came to them that Lee had "disclosed nothing," "and," says Longstreet, "all rode back to their camps little wiser than when they went, except that they found General Lee's object was to learn of the temper of those of his officers whom he did not know, and of the condition and tone among their troops." Surely no bad illustration of the new commander's wisdom!

One more personal touch follows. General Whiting was afraid of bayous and parallels, and complained of the sickness in his command on account of his position at Fair Oaks, and asked that his command be given a better position. "Whiting's Division was broken up," says Longstreet. "Three of his brigades were ordered to A. P. Hill's Division. He was permitted to choose

two brigades that were to constitute his own command. Besides his own he selected Hood's Brigade. With these two he was ordered by way of Lynchburg to report to General Jackson in the valley district." Longstreet's thrust at Whiting throws unconsciously a ray on Lee. Whiting, however, was soon to come to Longstreet's relief on the hills above Beaver Dam Creek, and within the month, Hood's Texans were to "put on immortality" by being the first to pierce Fitz John Porter's blazing lines.

This was undoubtedly the same conference of which Mr. Davis speaks,* and at which he was present, having, as he rode by on his way out to the army, seen a number of horses at a house, among which he recognized General Lee's horse, and having joined the conference. "The tone of the conversation," he says, "was quite despondent, and one especially pointed out the inevitable consequence of the enemy's advance by throwing out bayous and constructing successive parallels." This must have been the same general whose division, as Longstreet states, was broken up, and here we have the reason for it.

Long supplements the account of this first meeting of Lee and his generals given by Longstreet.

* "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy," vol. II, chap. XXIII.

"The principal officers of the army were," he says, "present and were almost unanimous in the opinion that the line then occupied should be abandoned for one nearer Richmond, which was considered [by them] more defensible."

Lee, as reported by Longstreet, said nothing at the time; but Long states that he made a personal reconnoissance of the whole position and then, against this almost unanimous judgment of his generals, "declared his intention of holding it," and "ordered it to be immediately fortified in the most effective manner." * How effective it was the 26th and 27th of June were to show.

This meeting of Lee and his generals had something of the effect which Napoleon's first meeting with his generals in Italy had. From that moment the army felt a new hand and soon acknowledged its master. His first act was one which should dispel the delusion that he was great only in defensive operations. It was, indeed, the height of audacity and the forerunner in a career in which audacity was possibly the chief element.

Massing his troops suddenly on the north side of the Chickahominy, and calling Stonewall Jackson from the valley to meet him at a given point at a given hour, he fell upon McClellan's intrench-

* Long's "Robert E. Lee," pp. 163, 164.

ments, crushed his right wing, and rolled him back to the upland plain of Malvern Hill. Was it on the defensive or the offensive that he acted when he conceived and carried through to supreme success those masterly tactics? Was he acting on the defensive or offensive when again, dashing upon him on the intrenched uplands of Malvern Hill, he swept him back to his gun-boats and shattered at once his plans and his prestige? It was a battle fought as Grant fought at second Cold Harbor, mainly by frontal attack; and, like the plan of second Cold Harbor, has been criticised as costing needless waste of life. But, unlike Grant's futile and costly assaults, Malvern Hill, however bloody it was, proved successful. That night McClellan, his great army shattered and his prestige destroyed, retreated to the shelter of his gun-boats. Lee's audacious tactics saved Richmond. It was not until nearly three years had passed, and until hundreds of thousands of lives had been spent, and the seed-corn of the Confederate South had been ground in the evergrinding mills of war, that a Union picket ever again got a glimpse of the spires of Richmond, or any Union soldier, other than a prisoner of war, heard her church bells pealing in the quiet night.

It had long been plain to Lee's clear vision that

the best defence of Virginia's capital was an offensive movement which should menace the Federal capital and compel the Washington government to hold for its defence the troops which otherwise would join McClellan, and as early as April 29 he had suggested to Stonewall Jackson, then operating in the Valley of Virginia, a threatening countermove to prevent, if possible, McDowell from crossing the Rappahannock and joining McClellan. This Jackson had promptly proceeded to do and had executed his famous double. Crossing the Blue Ridge, as if leaving the Valley of Virginia, then doubling back, he had marched on Milroy, and, defeating him at McDowell, had pursued him to Franklin, and had raised such a commotion in Washington that Banks, Fremont, and McDowell were all set on him by the panic-stricken authorities. Two weeks before the battle of Seven Pines, Lee had again prompted Jackson to move on Banks and, if successful, drive him back toward the Potomac and create the impression that he intended to threaten that line, a movement in which Jackson was completely successful. Thus Lee had, with the aid of his able lieutenant, stopped the armies of Fremont and McDowell from any attempt to reinforce McClellan, and was ready when the moment came to

carry out his far-reaching plan to defeat and possibly destroy by one swift blow McClellan's great army, now lying at the gates of Richmond and holding both sides of the Chickahominy.

It is no part of the plan of this book to discuss in detail Lee's consummate tactics; but a clear outline of his far-seeing plan is necessary. McClellan's army, flushed with hope after the constant advance up the Peninsula, lay in a long shallow arc to the east and north of Richmond, extending from the vicinity of the James to the hills above Beaver Dam Creek—five fine army corps in all. Fitz John Porter's corps, his right wing, lay intrenched on these uplands on the north of the Chickahominy. Franklin's corps lay next to the Chickahominy on the south, Heintzelman on his left, resting on the broad morass of White Oak Swamp, with Keyes's corps behind them in reserve; and all were strongly intrenched.

Johnston had attacked on the south side of the Chickahominy and failed to dislodge McClellan. What would Lee do? His first act, as stated, was to overrule his generals' almost unanimous opinion to withdraw to the inner defence of Richmond. He retired his army only to the original position held before the assault at Seven Pines, and fortified on the south bank of the Chickahominy, to

secure that side of the river against any advance from that direction while he prepared for his coup on the north bank against McClellan's right wing, commanded by the gallant Fitz John Porter. The line, as thus selected, ran from Chaffin's Bluff on the north bank of the James across to a point on the Chickahominy above New Bridge (crossing the River Road about four miles, and the other roads about five miles, from Richmond), thence up the south bank of the Chickahominy to Meadow Bridge at the crossing of the Virginia Central Railroad. Along this line lay the six divisions in which Lee's army was organized: Longstreet on the right, and next, in order, Huger, D. H. Hill, Magruder, Whiting, and A. P. Hill, the latter guarding the left of the Confederate position above the Chickahominy. Each general was made responsible for his line, and was ordered to construct defences in his front, which, manned by the Army of Northern Virginia, should withstand any assault.

At first there appears to have been much complaining of the labor which this entailed on the men, and one of the general officers—a man more noted for his courage than for his reticence—is said to have harangued his men on the disgrace of having to shelter themselves behind sand-bags

and earthworks instead of being shown the enemy and led against him. In a short time, however, Lee's constant presence along the lines, his serene confidence and soldierly bearing are said to have restored the good temper and morale of the troops, and before long they began to look for his daily visits as he rode by inspecting the work. Even General Toombs, who had held in some contempt picks and spades, prepared fortifications of logs along his front.

Lee's military secretary notes, on the 3d of June, that the work "was in rapid progress all along the line. The men appeared in better spirits than the day before, and seemed to be interested in their work." And so on for many days. On June 6 he notes that "the troops are in good spirits, and their confidence in General Lee is rapidly increasing."

On June 16, General Lee, accompanied by Colonel Long, made a reconnoissance of the Federal position on the north side of the Chickahominy. "There was then on that side of the line a Federal force of about 25,000 men, commanded by General Fitz John Porter. The main body of this force occupied a position near Mr. Gaines's house, and one division, five or six thousand strong, was posted at Mechanicsville. "During this reconnois-

sance," continues Long, "General Lee turned to the writer and remarked: 'Now, Colonel Long, how can we get at those people?'"

"Fitz John Porter's position" appeared to him sufficiently exposed to invite attack, and, the force at Fredericksburg having been withdrawn, General Lee determined to assume the aggressive. This determination, however, was communicated only to his military family until he had fully matured his plan of operation, which he then submitted to Mr. Davis in a personal interview.

Thus, though he had as his first move withdrawn his army even nearer Richmond than before, he had no idea of remaining there idle while McClellan prepared to dislodge him. On the 8th of June he outlined to the Secretary of War his plan that Jackson should be "prepared to act with the army near Richmond if called on," and on the 11th, having decided to send Stuart to feel around McClellan's right wing, he wrote Jackson of his plans for McClellan's destruction, as follows:

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEAR RICHMOND,
*June* 11, 1862.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL THOMAS J. JACKSON, *Commanding the Valley District.*

*General:* Your recent successes have been the cause of the liveliest joy to this army, as well as to the country. The admiration caused by your

skill and boldness has been constantly mingled with solicitude for your situation. The practicability of reinforcing you has been the subject of earnest consideration. It has been determined to do so at the expense of weakening this army. Brigadier-General Lawton, with six regiments from Georgia, is on the way to you, and Brigadier-General Whiting, with eight veteran regiments, leaves here to-day. The object is to enable you to crush the forces opposed to you, then leave your unavailable troops to watch the country and guard the passes covered by your cavalry and artillery, and with your main body, including Ewell's Division and Lawton's and Whiting's command, move rapidly to Ashland by rail or otherwise, as you may find most advantageous, and sweep down between the Chickahominy and Pamunkey, cutting up the enemy's communications, while this army attacks General McClellan in front. He will thus, I think, be forced to come out of his intrenchments, where he is strongly posted on the Chickahominy and apparently prepared to move by gradual approaches on Richmond. Keep me advised of your movements, and, if practicable, precede your troops, that we may confer and arrange for simultaneous attack. I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

It was deemed important to ascertain how McClellan's line of communication with his base of supplies on the York River was protected. To

secure accurate information Lee despatched General Stuart with a small force (about 1,200 cavalry and a battery of horse artillery) * to investigate around his right flank and make a reconnoissance in the direction of McClellan's line of communication, with his base at West Point. Stuart's brilliant performance of this task set a new mark for cavalry leaders the world over. Setting forth from Richmond on the 11th of June, he rode north, as if bound for the mountains, then, turning eastward, passed down through Hanover upon McClellan's right, driving before him a small body of cavalry which he found there and defeating an occupying force found at Old Church, some ten miles below Hanover Court House on the Virginia Central Railroad. In a small skirmish between the two places he lost the only man lost in the raid, the gallant Captain Latané, who was killed leading a charge against a troop of the enemy which attempted to bar the way. Passing on from Old Church he struck McClellan's line of communication, the York River Railroad, at Tunstall's Station, where he destroyed the railroad and took note of the indifferent measures adopted to guard the line. Then knowing that an overwhelming force had been sent out in his

* Walter H. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 58.

rear to cut off his retreat, he conceived the daring plan of pushing onward and making a dash around McClellan's entire army.

Accordingly, turning southward, he headed straight for the Chickahominy, in McClellan's rear. Finding that the bridge on which he had expected to cross had been washed away, he tore down an old building near by and utilizing the remaining timbers of the old bridge, constructed a bridge, swam his horses, crossed in the rear of McClellan, and after a hazardous and record-breaking march, riding night and day, reached the James, swept up its north bank beyond McClellan's left, and reached Richmond with the information desired, having made a complete circuit of McClellan's army.

This achievement had several immediate consequences: It aroused a wide-spread distrust of McClellan; it possibly decided Lee to change his first plan to the one he finally adopted, of overwhelming McClellan's right and cutting him off from his base of supplies on the north; and it probably decided McClellan to establish a new base on the James. In any event, a few days later McClellan began to send transports, with all needed ammunition and supplies, to Harrison's Landing, on the James, to provide for a contin-

gency which he had for some time been considering—the possibility of needing some other base than West Point.

McClellan, however, while contemplating establishing a base of supplies on the James, which he controlled, in preparation for some quick move, appears to have continued satisfied with his former disposition of his forces, by which he occupied both sides of the Chickahominy within eight miles of Richmond, except that he transferred the Second and Sixth Corps to the south side of that stream, leaving only the Fifth Corps on the north side. Here he fortified the approaches to his position on the uplands behind Beaver Dam Creek. He yet more heavily fortified the position on the south side of the Chickahominy, extending his powerful field works from a point known as Golding's Farm to White Oak Swamp, a boggy and thickly timbered bottom extending for several miles at an angle to the Chickahominy. He appears to have been obsessed with the conviction that the enemy in front of him largely outnumbered him, and he constantly and urgently applied for reinforcements.

On the southern side, as we have seen, Jackson was instructed to strike a blow in the Shenandoah Valley which should startle Washington, and,

while they were still dazed, to hasten and join Lee on the Chickahominy, and with his veterans act as Lee's left wing in a blow on McClellan's right which should drive him from before Richmond. To make sure of this, as well as to lull McClellan to a sense of security, several brigades were sent to Jackson; but time appeared so important to Lee that Jackson was summoned to leave his cavalry and a small force to watch the enemy and join him without waiting for a stroke in the valley. The day after Stuart returned from his raid, Jackson was told that the sooner he could come the better. Putting his troops in motion, the general rode ahead to Richmond to learn the details of Lee's plans, and then rode back to hurry forward his troops, already pushing on by forced marches toward the field where, by Lee's brilliant plan, the assault was to be delivered at dawn on the 26th by his combined forces.* This he felt sure would force McClellan out of his entrenchments, where he was strongly posted and apparently prepared to move by gradual approaches on Richmond.

It has been stated that his despatching of troops to the valley was done ostentatiously to deceive the enemy; but Lee's letter of the same date to the Secretary of War disposes of this idea. In it

* Walter H. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 60.

he states that it is very desirable and important that the acquisition of troops to the command of General T. J. Jackson should be kept secret, and with this in view he requests the secretary to use his influence with the Richmond newspapers to prevent any mention of the same in the public prints.

Moreover, when he decided that he would not wait longer for Jackson, and three days later ordered him to join him at once, he again impressed on him that, "to be efficacious, the movement must be secret." The effect, however, had been already gained, for on the 18th McClellan telegraphed the government at Washington that some 10,000 men had been sent to Jackson the same day that Jackson, doubling on his track with three divisions, "containing ten brigades, with eight batteries," perhaps 25,000 men in all, headed for the Chickahominy.

Jackson had already in the intervening time fought, on June 8 and 9, respectively, the victorious battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic, defeating Fremont and Shields, and struck new awe in the breast of the government at Washington. And so rapid and secret were his movements that while Mr. Lincoln and McClellan were exchanging telegrams relative to Jackson's reinforcements from Lee, he was already half way to

Richmond. And when, on the 25th of June, Secretary Stanton, in reply to a despatch from McClellan, asking for the latest information about Jackson, telegraphed that he had heard that Jackson was at Gordonsville with 10,000 rebels, but that neither McDowell nor Banks nor Fremont had any knowledge of his movements, Jackson was bivouacked at Ashland, but a few hours from the field of Gaines's Mill.

Lee's first plan appears to have been to bring Jackson down from the valley and fling him upon McClellan's right, and at the same time with such turning movement attack McClellan in front, somewhat as had been done at Seven Pines. But this plan was subsequently abandoned for one by which Jackson was, as we have seen, still to attack McClellan's right, as previously proposed, and Lee was to cross to the north of the Chickahominy and unite with him in first destroying McClellan's right wing and then in falling upon his main body in the retreat down the Peninsula, which he felt sure he would compel.* Longstreet asserts that he suggested this movement to Lee; but the fact is questioned by most authorities and denied by some, and the claim, in face of Lee's silence and of other incontrovertible facts, appears

* Ropes, II, p. 165.

untenable. The chief danger, and a grave one, in this plan was that McClellan, if he learned of the intended removal from his front of Lee's main body, might suddenly assume the offensive and, carrying the depleted works in his front by a sudden assault, seize Richmond.

The matter resolved itself, finally, into a decision based on the character of the two generals. Lee's plan was the height of audacity; but he decided upon it and carried it through with unwavering resolution to a brilliant conclusion. McClellan did, indeed, on learning through his secret-service agents and an occasional deserter that Jackson was on his way to join in an attack on him, take steps to assume the offensive. He directed General Porter to make provision to guard his right flank (June 23), and spoke of "the decisive movement" to be made to "determine the fate of Richmond." * He sent General Casey to the White House to protect his base of supplies and his line of communication therewith. He ordered Heintzelman to advance his pickets on the Williamsburg Road, in the direction of Richmond, and so satisfied was he with his progress that he telegraphed to Washington to announce the success of the movement.

* Allan, p. 136. Ropes, II, p. 169.

At this time, however, Jackson, almost at the end of his long march, was drawing near Ashland, and Lee was writing his battle order, which was to roll up McClellan's right wing beyond the Chickahominy and send it across the stream by night, shattered and disheartened. In this movement of McClellan's a severe fight took place between Hooker, on the one side, supported by Kearney on the left and Richardson, of Sumner's corps, on the right, and Armistead and Wright, of Huger's Division, on the Southern side, reinforced later by Mahone and Ransom. The fight lasted until night, and the losses on either side were between four and five hundred men. That night the Federals fell back to their old positions. With this affair, says Allan, "McClellan's opportunity of delivering battle on his own terms passed away." *

Lee, who up to this time had held his forces in hand on the south side of the Chickahominy, now, as the Federals retired, moved Longstreet and D. H. Hill over toward the Chickahominy to be ready to cross near Mechanicsville and join in the attack on Porter next day. His plan was to leave 30,000 men to hold McClellan's main body of 70,000 men and with 50,000 fall on his right wing, numbering only some 35,000 men.

* Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," pp. 74, 75.

Lee's specific battle order was issued on the 24th, and is given in full (in Appendix A) for the benefit of those who wish to study his first battle order.

Had these orders been carried out exactly, there is no doubt that Porter would have been flanked and forced out of his position without the frightful cost of A. P. Hill's deadly assaults on the heights above Beaver Dam and Powhite Creeks. With Jackson up, Lee's army numbered about 80,000 men.* His plan briefly was for Jackson, with his veterans, to advance before daylight on June 26, with Stuart on his left, and turn the long right wing of McClellan's army, under Porter, posted at Mechanicsville in a strong position, commanding the turnpike and bridge across the Chickahominy, with Beaver Dam Creek and its upland behind it; for Branch's Brigade, facing Porter, to keep in touch with Jackson, and on his advance to cross the Chickahominy and rejoin his commander, A. P. Hill; for A. P. Hill, as soon as he knew Jackson was engaged, to cross the Chickahominy at the Meadow Bridge and uncover the crossing of the Chickahominy at the Mechanicsville Bridge; for Longstreet to cross to the support of A. P. Hill and for D. H. Hill to cross to the support of Jackson; and the front divisions

* *Ibid.*, p. 69.

moving together, with Jackson in advance, would sweep down the Chickahominy, drive Porter from his position above New Bridge, and pressing forward together toward the York River Railroad, close upon McClellan's rear and force him down the Chickahominy. Meanwhile Magruder and Huger were to hold the defences on the south side of the Chickahominy and keep McClellan's main army well occupied.

Lee's plan was the consummation of audacity, for it would leave only 30,000 men to confront and hold McClellan's left wing and centre on the south of the Chickahominy, while he assaulted his right wing on the north bank with his main army. Happily for Lee, McClellan was obsessed with the idea that the force opposite to him numbered at least 200,000 men. This idea had held him back hitherto. This idea held him back now. He neither reinforced Porter on the north bank of the river until the 27th, nor attacked Lee's front though it had been denuded to barely 30,000 men. The time fixed for the assault was based on Jackson's conviction that he could be up and ready to attack at daylight on the 26th of June. But for once in his life Jackson was not "up." He was to have been at the Slash Church, near Ashland, on the 25th, and was to bivouac near the Central

Railway (now the Chesapeake and Ohio), ready to march at three o'clock on the morning of the 26th on the road to Pole Green Church to deliver the assault which was to be the signal to A. P. Hill to cross the Chickahominy. But it was not until four o'clock that afternoon that he was able to reach the neighborhood of the field of battle, where the fight had been raging for several hours, and even then he did not attack, but halted and lay with the roar of the guns to his right distinctly audible.

A. P. Hill having waited all day for news of Jackson, finally, fearful that the whole plan might miscarry, moved at three o'clock, crossed the Chickahominy at Meadow Bridge, and carried the stoutly defended position of Mechanicsville, several miles below. Here he found himself in front of Porter, posted "in a formidable position" above Beaver Dam Creek, with his entire line covered by strong entrenchments, the approach to which was over an open plain exposed to a withering fire of cannon and musketry. Here lay McCall's powerful division of 9,500 men and beyond them in supporting distance were two brigades of Morell's division where they could guard the Federal right or support the centre. Without waiting for further news of Jackson, Hill, who was an ardent

fighter, pushing forward, assaulted furiously, but in vain, the strongly defended position beyond Beaver Dam Creek. The utmost heroism was shown on both sides, as the frightful death-roll showed. When night fell the Confederate losses in killed and wounded are said to have been nearly 1,500 men,* while the Union losses were only 361, and, according to Ropes's view, Hill, who had "attacked fiercely and recklessly, was repulsed with great slaughter without having made the smallest impression on the Federal lines." †

Jackson, who had moved from Ashland at three o'clock in the morning, reached Hundley's Corners, some three miles from the battle-field, about four in the afternoon, and, though the battle was thundering not far away, he went into bivouac, an act which has given rise to endless wonder and discussion.

It has always been a question among military students as to on whom rested the responsibility for the costly attack of the 26th of June on the formidable position above Beaver Dam Creek. Ropes places it on A. P. Hill, to whom he refers as "a daring and energetic but inconsiderate officer." Henderson declares that "the order

* Livermore's "Numbers and Losses," p. 82.
† Ropes, II, p. 172.

of June 24, instructing Jackson to start from Slash Church at 3 A. M. on the 26th, and thus leading the other generals to believe that he would certainly be there, should never have been issued," and thus lays the responsibility on Lee. Allan states that Lee's original plan, by which Jackson was to turn McClellan's right wing, failed through Jackson's not being up. "The Confederate leader felt that his plan of operation must now be apparent to General McClellan," and that "with two-thirds of his army north of the Chickahominy, and but one-third holding the lines in front of the city against McClellan's main body, no time must be allowed his adversary to make new dispositions or to set forward a counter movement against Richmond. He, therefore, ordered A. P. Hill to make a direct attack on the Federal positions." * This inferentially seems to place the responsibility on Jackson. And to the same effect are the declarations of General Long and Colonel Taylor, both of whom were on Lee's staff and both of whom give the fear of McClellan's making a counter attack on Richmond as the reason for not delaying the attack till Jackson had come up on the flank. That night and next morning, however, McClellan, under protection of his artillery, re-

* Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 80.

tired his right wing to his second line above Powhite Creek, in a crescent fronting Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor and covering his bridges. Lee, eager to secure the fruits of his strategy and crush McClellan's right wing, and apprehensive lest McClellan might, on finding his main army beyond the Chickahominy, overwhelm Magruder and Huger and march on Richmond, assumed personal direction of the field next day. As soon as it was discovered that Porter was withdrawing his troops from his position above Beaver Dam Creek, Lee ordered A. P. Hill to push forward in pursuit, and D. H. Hill to join Jackson to the left in an attack around Porter's right flank. Magruder and Huger, on the south side of the Chickahominy, were ordered to demonstrate against the forces in their front "to prevent, as far as possible, all movement on that side," and fully complied with their instructions. It was about noon when A. P. Hill came up with the rear guard of Porter's troops in front of the new Federal position above Powhite Creek.* This position, like his first, a high plateau above a stream which winds through a deep "bottom," was naturally a strong one, and was rendered almost unassailable by the conforma-

* The account of these movements is taken partly from Henderson and partly from Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia."

tion of the ground, protected by almost impassable swamps and by the abatis of felled trees beyond an open plain a quarter of a mile wide, swept by a triple line of fire and commanded by heavy batteries on both sides of the Chickahominy. It was a desperate undertaking to drive such a force from such a position, but the need was great—Richmond hung in the balance. Lee promptly attacked again, Hill still leading the assault, and after terrific fighting, carried the breastworks, and forced Porter back to the river, across which he withdrew his shattered corps that night.

This battle is said by Allan to have been, perhaps, the most obstinately contested battle of the war, and as Lee's first great battle its details may be given. On finding that Porter had made a stand above Gaines's Mill, Hill's front brigade (Gregg's) was at once deployed and sent forward. The Federal skirmishers were driven in, and Gregg, descending into the deep valley, crossed the stream and formed in line on the east side preparatory to attacking the Federal lines on the face and crest of the ridge.* His other brigades, in order—Branch, J. R. Anderson, Field, and Archer—were rapidly moved up and formed in line with Gregg,

* Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 36. Official Records, series I, vol. XI, part II, p. 836.

with Pender in reserve. Here Hill waited, by Lee's orders, till he learned that Longstreet was coming up, lower down the creek, on his right, and then, the approach of Jackson and D. H. Hill being momentarily expected, Lee, who had assumed personal command of the field, gave the order; and about half-past two A. P. Hill let loose his lines, and they dashed forward against the Federal left and centre.

The assault was one of the most intrepid made during the war, and it was met with equal intrepidity. Says A. P. Hill: "The incessant roar of musketry and the deep thunder of the artillery told that the whole force of the enemy was in my front. Branch becoming hard pressed, Pender was sent to his relief. Field and Archer were also doing their part as directed. . . . These two brigades, under their heroic leaders, moving across the open field, met the enemy behind an abatis and strong entrenchments at the base of a long, wooded hill, the enemy being in three lines on the side of this declivity, its crest falling off into a plateau, and this plateau studded with guns. . . . Desperate but unavailing attempts were made to force the enemy's position. The 14th South Carolina, Colonel McGowen, on the extreme left, made several daring charges. The 16th North

Carolina, Colonel McElroy, and 22d, Lieutenant-Colonel Gray, at one time carried the crest of the hill, and were in the enemy's camp, but were driven back by overwhelming numbers. The 35th Georgia, Colonel Thomas, also drove through the enemy's lines like a wedge, but it was of no avail. Gregg and Branch fought with varying success, Gregg having before him the vaunted Zouaves and Sykes's regulars. Pender's Brigade was suffering heavily, but stubbornly held its own. Field and Archer met a withering storm of bullets, but pressed on to within a short distance of the enemy's works, but the storm was too fierce for such a handful of men. They recoiled and were again pressed to the charge, but with no better success. These brave men had done all that any brave soldiers could do. Directing the men to lie down, the fight was continued and help awaited. From having been the attacking, I now became the attacked, but stubbornly, gallantly was the ground held. My division was thus engaged full two hours before assistance was received."*

Meanwhile Jackson, moving toward Cold Harbor, on finding the roads in his front obstructed

* A. P. Hill's report. Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 87; War Records, series I, vol. XI, part II, p. 836.

and defended by sharp-shooters, had "gone back into the Bethesda Church Road. This threw him in the rear of D. H. Hill, and it was past midday when these commanders reached the vicinity of Cold Harbor." Here Jackson halted for something over an hour, while the sound of the battle rolled up from the direction of the Chickahominy. He says in his report that "soon after, General A. P. Hill became engaged, and being unacquainted with the ground and apprehensive, from what appeared to me to be the respective positions of the Confederate and Federal forces engaged, that if I then pressed forward, our troops would be mistaken for the enemy and fired into, and hoping that Generals A. P. Hill and Longstreet would soon drive the Federals toward me, I directed General D. H. Hill to move his division to the left of the road, so as to leave between him and the woods on the right of the road an open space, across which I hoped the enemy would be driven."*

This halt of Jackson's came near losing the day, and had McClellan sent Porter the reinforcements he urgently asked for, the error might not have been retrieved. "As on the previous day," says Henderson, "the Confederate attack had failed in combination. A. P. Hill had fought for two hours

* *Ibid.*, series I, vol. XI, part II, p. 553.

without assistance. Longstreet had then come in with Whiting. Jackson and D. H. Hill were still away. . . . A battery of D. H. Hill's Division was brought into action, but was soon silenced, and beyond this insignificant demonstration the Army of the Valley made no endeavor to join the battle. The brigades were halted by the roadside. Away to the right, above the intervening forest, rolled the roar of battle, the crash of shells and the din of musketry, but no orders were given for the advance."*

At length Jackson awoke to the imperative demand of the situation. According to Long, Lee sent several staff officers to him to bring him to the support of Hill and Longstreet. Others give him the credit of ordering his command forward when, judging from the sound and direction of the firing that the original plan had failed, he advanced to the attack. D. H. Hill, east of the Old Cold Harbor Road, was sent forward against the enemy's left flank. Ewell was on his right, with Lawton, Whiting, Winder, in order, still further to the right. The position which they attacked, like that in front of A. P. Hill and Longstreet, might well have appeared impregnable. Whiting, with Law's and Hood's Brigades, moving to the right,

* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 29.

were met by General Lee and directed to support General A. P. Hill, and when Jackson's lines advanced they found themselves confronted by the same conditions which had broken and dashed to pieces the charging lines of A. P. Hill and Longstreet. Again and again they had moved forward, only to be smashed to pieces and form and dash forward again. It was then, adds Henderson, that Jackson recognized that the "sustained fire was a sure token that the enemy still held his own; and for the first time and the last his staff beheld their leader riding restlessly to and fro, and heard his orders given in a tone which betrayed the storm within."*

Finally he sent to his lieutenants an order. "Tell them," he said, "this affair must hang in suspense no longer. Let them sweep the field with the bayonet."

So obstinately did Porter cling to his position, and so complete was the repulse of Hill, that Lee thought that they must outnumber him, and felt that the enemy was gradually gaining ground. He, therefore, "sent orders to Longstreet, who was near at hand, to make a diversion against the Federal left near the river." † According to Long-

* *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 34.

† War Records, series I, vol. II, part II, p. 737. Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 88.

street, he sent an urgent message to that general, who was in reserve on the extreme right, that "all other efforts had failed, and that unless he could do something the day was lost."

This diversion was made by three brigades under Wilcox, and Pickett's Brigade, which developed the strong position and force of the enemy in his front. "Whereupon," Longstreet says, "from the urgent nature of the message from the commanding general and my own peculiar position, I determined to change the feint into an attack, and orders for a general attack were issued." * He adds that "at this moment General Whiting arrived with his division and put it into position at once and joined in the assault."

At this time, however, Porter's reserves had already been exhausted. He had despatched to McClellan in the morning that he hoped to do without aid; but that his retreat was a delicate movement, and he requested that Franklin, or some other command, be held ready to reinforce him. Slocum's division reached the field at four o'clock and enabled Porter to hold out for some two hours more. An urgent appeal was sent to McClellan by Porter for further reinforcements; but, to quote Allan, "so efficiently had Lee's

* *Ibid.* Ropes, II.

orders to Magruder and Huger, to hold the enemy in their front by demonstrations and a display of force on the Richmond side, been carried out, that none of the Federal commanders thought it safe to spare any more troops to aid Porter." McClellan, undoubtedly, toward the end of the day, made efforts to relieve Porter. At half-past five, having heard from Franklin that he did not think it prudent to take any more troops from his front at that time, he sent him word that Porter was hard pressed, and that it was "not a question of prudence but of possibilities"; that he had ordered eight regiments of Sumner's to support Porter, and, if possible, Franklin was also to send a brigade.*

About dusk the brigades of French and Meagher were sent across, and arrived just in time to save the defeat of Porter from becoming a rout.

Henderson, who is certainly high authority, and who has at times something of a brief for Jackson, has undertaken to relieve Jackson for his extraordinary and inexplicable failure to bear the part expected of him in the battle, and says that "Lee had anticipated that Jackson's approach would cause the enemy to prolong their front in order to cover their line of retreat to the White

* War Records, series I, vol. XI, part I, p. 59.

House, and so weaken that part of the position which was to be attacked by Longstreet"; and that "Jackson had been ordered to draw up his troops so as to meet such a contingency." He admits that no record of such an order is to be found, and that Jackson never mentioned, either at the time or afterward, what its purport was, and when he states that his surviving staff officers are unanimous in declaring that he must have received direct instructions from General Lee, he shows that they are only reasoning on probabilities and not stating a fact known to them.

In his later account of the battle, contained in his history of the war, Longstreet states that "just as the brigades advanced, General Whiting pressed through the woods with his own and Hood's Brigades and reported that he had lost sight of his commander, General Jackson, in the forest, and asked him to put him into the battle, which was done." From Longstreet's account it might appear that he, himself, had ordered the general advance which carried the day; but a greater general than Longstreet ordered this advance—the same who had met Whiting and sent him to his aid.* In this advance Hood's Texans led the way, followed by Whiting's other brigade, who had

* Long's "Robert E. Lee," p. 173.

orders to charge without firing a shot. "The Federal lines were broken near their centre. The Confederates bore in, turning the right of the troops which constituted Porter's left, and also making it imperative for those on the right of his line to abandon their position." Before nightfall the field was swept, and as the sun sank, the standards of the Army of Northern Virginia were planted on the breastworks from one end to the other where Porter's intrepid soldiery had clung till the rammers could not be driven into their guns.

"As the Federals retreated," continues Henderson, "knots of brave men, hastily collected by officers of all ranks, still offered a fierce resistance, and, supported by the batteries, inflicted terrible losses on the crowded masses which swarmed up from the ravine; but the majority of the infantry, without ammunition and with few officers, streamed in disorder to the rear. For a time the Federal gunners stood manfully to their work. Porter's reserve artillery, drawn up midway across the upland, offered a rallying point to the retreating infantry. Three small squadrons of the Fifth United States Cavalry made a gallant but useless charge, in which, out of seven officers, six fell; and on the extreme right the division of regulars, supported by a brigade of volunteers, fell back

fighting to a second line. As at Bull Run, the disciplined soldiers alone showed a solid front amid the throng of fugitives. . . . But their stubborn valor availed nothing against the superior numbers which Lee's fine strategy had concentrated on the field of battle."

The Confederates pushed forward across the hard-won field, gathering up prisoners and capturing twenty-two guns, besides many stands of colors, and it is believed by close students of the situation that had they kept on they might have captured many more, and possibly have destroyed McClellan's entire right wing. From this additional disaster McClellan was saved by the obscurity of the night and the opportune arrival of Meagher and French with 5,000 fresh troops. "Between the bridges and the battle-field, on the slopes falling to the Chickahominy, the dark forest covered the retreat of the routed army. Night had already fallen. The confusion in the ranks of the Confederates was extreme, and it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe. All direction had been lost. None knew the bearings of the bridges, or whether the Federals were retreating east or south. Regiments had already been exposed to the fire of their comrades." At this crucial moment, cheers rolling up from the valley

through the dusk told that reinforcements had arrived, and the spent Confederates were halted on the field. "Pushing through the mass of fugitives with the bayonet, these fine troops . . . formed line on the southern crest of the plateau. Joining the regulars, who still presented a stubborn front, they opened a heavy fire, and under cover of their steadfast lines, Porter's troops withdrew across the river."

Thus Lee defeated McClellan in the furious battle of Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor, seizing his position after desperate fighting, capturing his line of communication to West Point, and, driving him across the Chickahominy, forced him to abandon his threatening position on its south side and fall back across White Oak Swamp to Malvern Hill, some miles to the rear. It was a brilliant stroke for Lee to have crushed McClellan's right wing, while he held the rest of his army with only 25,000 men. And had Jackson attacked on the morning of the 26th, as planned, or possibly even on the morning of the 27th, the victory might have been yet more decisive.* But it was necessary to do more to drive McClellan back from before Richmond.

Jackson's error in underestimating the time re-

* Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 68–78.

quired to join Lee in his first assault on McClellan was a costly one, and Lee's casualty list was appalling.* A considerable part of this might have been spared had Jackson been able to turn McClellan's wing on the morning of the 26th before Hill crossed the creek in front to attempt the desperate assault on his centre.

On the 28th Lee held his army in hand, watchful to see which way McClellan, after his staggering blow, would move, whether by the way he had come, down the Peninsula, or toward the James. Ewell and Stuart were sent forward down the river to strike McClellan's line of communication and probable line of retreat along the York River Railroad. The railroad was reached at Dispatch Station—which was destroyed together with the stores collected there—and, the railroad bridge across the Chickahominy having been burnt by the guard on its retreat, Ewell halted there while Stuart rode on to West Point, where the

* Colonel Thomas L. Livermore figures the Union losses at Gaines's Mill at 894 killed, 3,107 wounded, and 2,836 missing—total, 6,834; the Confederate losses, killed and wounded, at 8,751. The losses in all the Seven Days' Battles, from the 25th of June to July 1, he states as follows: Union—Killed, 1,734; wounded, 8,062; missing, 6,053; total, 15,849. Confederate—Killed, 3,478; wounded, 16,261; missing, 875; total, 20,614. ("Numbers and Losses," p. 86.) Allan reckons the Confederate losses at 19,700; the Union losses at 15,765. ("Army of Northern Virginia," p. 141.)

enemy's vast stores that McClellan had left were being destroyed. Driving off Stoneman, he captured what was left. Meantime McClellan, having on the night of the 27th held a council of war with his generals, had destroyed his upper bridges across the Chickahominy and the immense quantity of stores brought with his army, and now, in full retreat on James River, was endeavoring to get his army across White Oak Swamp at his rear. This difficult and hazardous movement was ably and successfully conducted, owing largely to the "vast and impenetrable forest and jungle, under cover of which it was being executed," and to the failure of the commanders in his front to ascertain his movements.

Inasmuch as Lee has been criticised for not discovering earlier McClellan's intentions, his own views of the matter are interesting. Speaking of the 28th, he says: "During the forenoon, columns of dust south of the Chickahominy showed that the Federal army was in motion. The abandonment of the railroad and the destruction of the bridge proved that no further attempt would be made to hold that line. But from the position it occupied, the roads, which led toward James River, would also enable it to reach the lower bridges over the Chickahominy and retreat down

the Peninsula. In the latter event it was necessary that our troops should continue on the north bank of the river, and until the intention of General McClellan was discovered it was deemed injudicious to change their disposition. Ewell was, therefore, ordered to proceed to Bottom's Bridge, to guard that point, and the cavalry to watch the bridges below. No certain indications of a retreat to the James River were discovered by our forces on the south side of the Chickahominy, and late in the afternoon the enemy's works were reported to be fully manned. The strength of these fortifications prevented Generals Huger and Magruder from discovering what was passing in their front. Below the enemy's works the country was densely wooded and intersected by impassable swamps, at once concealing his movements and precluding reconnoissances except by the regular roads, all of which were strongly guarded. The bridges over the Chickahominy, in rear of the enemy, were destroyed, and their reconstruction impracticable in the presence of his whole army and powerful batteries. We were, therefore, compelled to wait until his purpose should be developed. Generals Huger and Magruder were again directed to use the utmost vigilance and pursue the enemy vigorously should they discover

that he was retreating. During the afternoon and night of the 28th the signs of a general movement were apparent, and no indications of his approach to the lower bridges of the Chickahominy having been discovered by the pickets in observation at those points, it became manifest that General McClellan was retreating to the James River."*

As soon as it became apparent what he would do, Lee ordered his troops to the south side of the Chickahominy and proceeded to attack again at Savage Station on the 29th. It was the afternoon, however, before Lee was sufficiently informed as to McClellan's disposition of his forces to attack him again, and when Magruder assaulted his lines near Savage Station, McClellan had been in full retreat long enough to get most of his army across White Oak Swamp, and it was only his strong rear guard that Magruder struck, the main army being on the other side of the impenetrable jungle and morass.

Longstreet crossed at New Bridge in the morning with his own and A. P. Hill's commands and advanced to the Darbytown Road. Holmes was brought over from Drewry's Bluff to the north side of the James. Magruder was sent forward toward

* Lee's report, W. R., series I, vol. XI, part I, p. 493.

Savage Station, and Jackson was directed to cross at Grapevine Bridge and support the movement. Jackson, however, was delayed all day in rebuilding the bridge. Magruder was slow, and on coming up with Sumner at Savage Station, failed to use all his troops, and though McLaws, in the lead, made a gallant fight against superior numbers till dark, it was not supported, and McClellan was enabled that night to get across White Oak Swamp and destroy the bridges behind him.

"Lee's design was to close in as rapidly as possible on the rear and flank of the retreating enemy, and by throwing his whole force on McClellan's army, already staggering as it was by Porter's defeat, and still more demoralized by a hurried retreat and an immense destruction of stores, to deal it a decisive blow. For this purpose all his lieutenants were ordered to press the enemy on the morrow."

Magruder was ordered to pass southward around by the Darbytown Road, and then was sent forward to unite with Holmes and attack the enemy before he could secure his position at Malvern Hill. He arrived, however, too late to aid Holmes, who had attacked, but found himself under the fire of all their guns, both on land and water, and was forced to retire. Jackson, having crossed the

Chickahominy during the night and pushed on to White Oak Swamp, found himself stopped by the destruction of the bridge and unable to rebuild it in face of the furious fire which was kept up by the enemy (Franklin's corps) on the other side.

In the expectation that Jackson would force his crossing at White Oak Swamp and be on McClellan's rear in time to co-operate with Longstreet, the latter advanced down the Long Bridge Road and encountered the main force of McClellan's army posted at Frazier's Farm, or Glendale, at the Charles City Cross Roads. Here Longstreet's Division was deployed across the Long Bridge Road, with a division of A. P. Hill in reserve, except Branch's Brigade, which was posted to the right and rear to guard against Hooker's division, posted behind the Quaker Road to the right. Huger's column was expected to advance on the Charles City Road and attack on the right. Longstreet, supposing that the firing on his right came from Huger's attack, began the battle. His order was, he states, "for Colonel Jenkins to silence a battery which was annoying them, and this was taken as an order to advance." It developed instantly that the enemy was present in great force, and from this time until night the divisions of Longstreet and A. P. Hill maintained "one of

the bloodiest struggles that took place during the Civil War." On both sides along the Darbytown Road charges and countercharges were made with the greatest gallantry; but when night fell, McCall's fine division, who had borne the brunt of the fight, had been crushed, its gallant commander captured, and fourteen guns as well. The Federal lines, though bravely defended by numbers largely superior to the attacking force, had been carried with the exception of a single position. But though a staggering blow had been dealt to the Federal army, "night found it still holding the Quaker Road and its line of retreat consequently unobstructed." Critics appear to be agreed that this battle of Glendale, or Frazier's Farm, was "the crisis of the Seven Days' Battles," and that had Lee been able to concentrate his whole strength against the Federals, it is probable that McClellan would never have reached the James.* "This day," adds Allan, "marked the crisis in the Seven Days' Battles, for it was on this 30th of June that Lee more nearly grasped the full fruits of his strategy, and McClellan more nearly escaped complete overthrow, than on any other."

Once more Lee's admirable plans had failed because of the failure of his lieutenants to co-

* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 48.

operate at the crucial moment. "The Confederate commander had arranged with admirable strategy to throw his whole army upon the flank and rear of his retreating foe. While Holmes, on his right, was to try to seize Malvern Hill, and Jackson, on his left, was to press the rear of the retreating army, three columns under Huger, Longstreet, and Magruder were to strike at his centre. . . . They were all in position by midday, and by the middle of the afternoon 50,000 men or more should have been attacking the Union lines. But, as we have seen, only the column under Longstreet and A. P. Hill did anything—the others accomplished nothing. They did not even prevent reinforcements from getting to the Federal centre. It is impossible to deny that General Lee was very poorly served on this occasion by his subordinates." *

This failure on the part of Lee's lieutenants to co-operate was to cost the South and the Army of Northern Virginia dear. That night McClellan continued his retreat and by daylight the commands of Franklin, Slocum, Heintzelman, and Sumner had joined Porter on the uplands of Malvern Hill, where McClellan had determined to

* Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," pp. 120, 121. *Cf.* also "History of the Civil War in America," Comte de Paris, vol. II, p. 132.

make his last stand. Here in what is esteemed one of the strongest positions that an army could assume—a high plateau, rising to the height of over 100 feet above the surrounding country, a mile and a half in length, by a half mile in breadth—admirably protected, both in front and on the sides, by deep bottoms and swamps, with wide stretches of open ground beyond them, and approached only by two roads—the River Road and the Quaker Road—McClellan posted his army in a great crescent. It was, indeed, formidable and could hardly have been stronger, with his remaining artillery, which—including his heavy siege guns, and aided by the raking fire from the gunboats in the river—was still powerful, covering with converging fire every point of the line. Here, however, notwithstanding the strength of the position, Lee determined to attack once more.

All of the forenoon and a part of the afternoon were spent in reconnoissances, and it was not until four o'clock that the attack began. Jackson, who had now come up, was on the left, with Whiting to the left of the Quaker Road, and D. H. Hill to the right with one of Ewell's Brigades, while Jackson's own division, with the rest of Ewell's troops, was in reserve. A half mile beyond Jackson's right was Huger and behind him, to the left, was

Magruder. Longstreet and A. P. Hill were in reserve behind Magruder on the Long Bridge Road and Holmes was on the River Road to the right.

It was now five o'clock, and "if anything was to be done, no more time should be lost." General Lee was urgent that the assault be made. The original order for battle had been given about noon, and there had been fighting to the extreme left. Armistead and Wright had attempted to advance and had been repulsed with heavy loss, and, with their batteries hammered to pieces, had been forced to withdraw them, and now "held their infantry in hand until the arrival of other troops." Here Whiting was carrying on a spirited but unequal artillery contest. Meantime efforts had been made to bring the artillery to the front; but owing to the swamps and thickets through which they had to force their way, they were overpowered by the concentrated fire of the Federal guns before they got into action. The obstacles, says Lee in his report, "presented by the woods and swamps made it impracticable to bring up a sufficient amount of artillery to oppose successfully the extraordinary force of that arm employed by the enemy, while the field itself offered so few positions favorable for its use and none for its proper concentration."

Lee, according to Longstreet, proposed to him now to move to the left with his own and A. P. Hill's Divisions and turn the Federal right, and this, he states, he issued his orders to do; but through some mistake the order to attack, which had already been issued, was not rescinded, and between five and six o'clock, Magruder, with only two brigades of his three divisions, Armistead's and Wright's, in position, engaged the enemy's left, and D. H. Hill, taking this for the signal, sent forward five brigades full against the enemy's front, only to have them decimated and forced back under the terrible concentrated fire of McClellan's massed guns.

From time to time after this, first in one part of the field and then in another, supports were sent in; intrepid advances and furious charges were made; but there was no concert. The two divisions under Magruder were beaten in detail; two or three brigades at one time were sent forward, and when broken and beaten back, others took their places, only to meet a similar fate. The battle was a succession of "desperate but disjointed and badly managed charges"; and when night fell, though neither Longstreet nor A. P. Hill had been engaged, and three of Jackson's Divisions—his own, Whiting's, and Ewell's

—had suffered little, and though Huger, on a point of etiquette, withheld supports, while Holmes had scarcely fought at all, five thousand Confederates had fallen bravely on the slopes of Malvern Hill, and McClellan's lines were still unbroken.

For making the frontal attack which now began and which proved so deadly to the assailants, instead of attempting to turn McClellan's flank, Lee has been often and severely criticised. The frontal attack, however, was due to the report made to Lee by Longstreet after Lee, who had been too indisposed himself to reconnoitre in person, had instructed Longstreet to reconnoitre the enemy's left and report whether an attack on that side was feasible. Jackson, it is said, was opposed to a frontal attack, preferring to turn the enemy's right. Longstreet, however, according to his own account, was of a different opinion and reported to General Lee that the "spacious open along Jackson's front appeared to offer a field for the play of a hundred or more guns," and he judged that it might justify assault, and the tremendous game at issue called for adventure. "I thought it probable," he adds, "that Porter's batteries under the cross-fire of the Confederate guns, posted on his left and front, could be thrown

into disorder and thus make way for the combined assaults of the infantry.

"I so reported, and General Lee ordered dispositions accordingly, sending the pioneer corps to cut a road for the right batteries." *

It was a costly sacrifice; but that night McClellan, feeling that his men were completely worn out, and knowing how large a portion of Lee's army had not been engaged the day before, and assured that he might look for further trouble if he remained in that position, withdrew his army under cover of his gunboats. "My men are completely exhausted," he wrote that day before the battle, "and I dread the result if we are attacked to-day by fresh troops. If possible, I shall retire to-night to Harrison's Bar, where the gunboats can render more aid in covering our position. Permit me to urge that not an hour should be lost in sending me fresh troops. More gunboats are much needed." †

The failure of some of his lieutenants to grasp the situation prevented the complete success of Lee's plans, and McClellan not only got safely across White Oak Swamp, and reached a position at Malvern Hill of such strength that the attack on

* "From Manassas to Appomattox," p. 143.

† Report on Conduct of War, vol. I, p. 340. Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 138.

him here has been considered by able critics almost the greatest error Lee ever committed; but saved his army. Whatever the errors of his lieutenants, Lee had saved Richmond. From this time he bore the fortunes of the Confederacy on his shoulders.

Thus Lee had, with less that 80,000 men, by his audacious tactics and masterly handling of his troops, defeated McClellan with more than 105,000 men and superior equipment, and driven him from position after position, relieving Richmond from what had appeared imminent danger of immediate capture.

Military critics have often wondered why Jackson, who both before and after the seven days' fighting around Richmond proved himself the most eager, prompt, and aggressive lieutenant that any commander had during the war, should apparently have been so slow in the execution of the part intrusted to him in this critical movement. Old soldiers who followed and adored him still discuss the mysterious failure, and admit that "Old Jack" was "not himself" at this crisis. Not only did he fail to attack that first afternoon on his arrival within sound of the furious battle raging but a few miles away, but next day also he halted at Cold Harbor for over an hour while Hill and

Longstreet were left to put in their last battalions, and again at White Oak Swamp, two days later, he failed, as he hardly ever did either earlier or later, to make good his attempt to reach the enemy's line.

An explanation of the first failure has been given that he mistook the road leading toward the field of Cold Harbor and missed his way.

The writer, as a resident of that region, familiar with the country and with the discussion of the facts, ventures to suggest a simple explanation.

The distance from the valley to the Chickahominy being about one hundred and thirty miles, the bringing forward of his troops, even with the indifferent assistance of his trains, occupied several days, and the general himself, with a staff officer, at a point some sixty-odd miles west of Richmond, left the train and rode to Richmond to consult with Lee as to details. His selection of this mode of travel has been attributed to his fear of being recognized if he should continue by train, but was no doubt partly to familiarize himself somewhat with the roads, which through Hanover wind among the forks of the Pamunkey through a thickly wooded, flat country, and are very confusing. It is of record that he then thought he could be up and ready to co-operate with Hill on the 25th, but General Longstreet claims that he urged that this was impossible, and that if not

the 27th, at the earliest the 26th should be set for the attack, which was agreed to. At Beaver Dam Station, on the railway, forty miles from Richmond, the last troops were taken from the train, and, together with those who had been marching the day before, took the road for Richmond by way of Honeyman's Bridge over the Little River, a branch of the North Anna, and then, owing to high water in the South Anna, instead of taking the shorter route by Groundsquirrel Bridge, some of them marched by way of the Fork Church to Ashland. From Little River to the field of Cold Harbor the roads are deep with sand, water is scant, and in the blazing days of late June the progress of the troops was much slower than had been reckoned on, and the move took nearly a day longer than had been expected. Meanwhile, Jackson, who had left his train and ridden sixty-odd miles to Richmond to confer with Lee, rode straight back to bring his men forward, met them at a point more than fifty miles from Richmond, and returned with them. Thus, when he reached the slashes of Hanover, he had been in the saddle almost continuously for several days and nights and was completely broken down.*

* I remember as a boy seeing Jackson's columns passing down the road near my home in Hanover, some fifteen miles above Ashland, and every hour or so the men were made to lie down full-length on the ground to rest. The troops, or a portion of

Members of a troop of cavalry, known as the Hanover Troop (Co. C, 4th Virginia Cavalry), who came from that region, were detailed to act as guides for the troops, but many of the roads are mere tracks, and the man detailed to guide Jackson,* on reaching the neighborhood of the battlefield, found so many new roads cut through the forest by McClellan's troops, and so many houses and other familiar landmarks gone, that he became confused and led the column some distance on the wrong road before discovering his error. It then became necessary to retrace their way; but, marching the other troops back and turning around the artillery in the narrow road, bordered by forest and thickets, much time was lost. Ewell, who was present, threatened to hang the guide; but Jackson intervened and bade him guide them back.† This, however, does not ac-

them, instead of keeping straight ahead across Newfound River and the South Anna by Groundsquirrel Bridge, turned off after crossing Little River at Honeyman's Bridge and marched to Ashland by the Fork Church.

* Lincoln Sydnor.

† The fact of Jackson's complete prostration is mentioned in a letter written at the time by his aide-de-camp, the gallant Major, afterward Lieutenant-Colonel, Alexander S. Pendleton, killed later at Fisher's Hill. The other circumstances I had stated to me in a letter from A. R. Ellerson, Esquire, a member of the Hanover troop, whose home was near Mechanicsville, and who was with Sydnor at Jackson's head-quarters and was sent with despatches from General Lee. See Appendix.

count for Jackson's failure to attack earlier on the day of Gaines's Mill, or his failure to cross and aid Magruder on the afternoon of the day of Savage Station, and Longstreet and Hill on the day of Frazier's Farm. Colonel Henderson exculpates him from adverse criticism, and thinks that he had good ground for his action on each occasion, which is certainly high authority. But the fact remains unexplained, and as Allan, who admired him vastly, admits, "it is best to set it down as one of the few great mistakes of his marvellous career."* Never before or after did Jackson fail to march to the sound of the guns or fail to keep a rendezvous on the field of battle.

One familiar only with the open fields to the west and north of Richmond would scarcely guess the extent of the almost impenetrable thickets along the Chickahominy. They were wellnigh as much a terra incognita to the Southern leaders as to the Northern. Jackson, as already stated, even with a guide familiar with the region, got entangled among them on his forced march down to join Lee, on the Wednesday of the second day's battle around Richmond, and thus failed to make the junction at the critical moment. While, however, these inextricable tangles of the swamps along the

* Allan's "Army of Northern Virginia," p. 121.

Chickahominy caused Lee much inconvenience, and frustrated portions of his plans for the destruction of the enemy, they stood him in good stead in his audacious attack on McClellan's far-stretched lines. They at once veiled his movements and offered a barrier broken only where the country roads of Hanover and Henrico pierced them at a few points easy to be defended. The swamps of the Chickahominy remained as dense and impenetrable as when John Smith, two centuries and a half before, had stuck fast in them a little lower down and fallen a prey to his enemies. For long distances they were so impenetrable that, as was said by the guide whom General Lee had sent for to pilot a part of his attacking forces, "not even an old hare could get through."

However it was, Lee relieved Richmond, and the war, from being based on the issue of a single campaign, was now a matter of years and treasure, and the years and the treasure that it required were mainly due to Lee's transcendent genius. It is probable that but for Lee the war would not have lasted two years.

It is one of the notable facts connected with the conduct of the war that the staff should have been so disproportioned to the demands on it. Nearly all critics have remarked on it. Lee had but few

trained soldiers on his staff; gallant gentlemen he had, men ready to lay down their lives for him or their cause; but not many of them men trained to war. Possibly, to this was due the fact that so often his best-laid plans failed of being exactly carried out. He never had a staff officer who could render him the service which he rendered Scott at Cerro Gordo and Contreras. He often rode with a single officer, and at times absolutely alone. And when toward the latter part of the war he wished to have his son as his chief of staff, the wish was denied him. Such was the strange constituency of the Confederate Government.

Whatever criticism may have been offered, the South was jubilant, and amid its tears acclaimed Lee and his gallant army as its saviors. And Lee himself appears to have been well content with the issue. The results of the battles around Richmond were summed up by him as follows:

In his General Order (No. 75, dated July 7, 1862), tendering his "warmest thanks and congratulations to the army by whose valor such splendid results were achieved," he says: "On Monday, June 26, the powerful and thoroughly equipped army of the enemy was intrenched in works vast in extent and most formidable in character, within sight of our capital.

"To-day the remains of that confident and threatening host lie upon the banks of the James River, thirty miles from Richmond, seeking to recover, under the protection of his gunboats, from the effects of a series of disastrous defeats.

"The immediate fruits of your success are the relief of Richmond from a state of siege, the routing of the great army that so long menaced its safety, many thousand prisoners, including officers of high rank, the capture or destruction of stores to the value of millions, and the acquisition of thousands of arms and fifty-one pieces of superior artillery."

He concludes, after a tribute to the "gallant dead who died nobly in defence of their country's freedom": "Soldiers, your country will thank you for the heroic conduct you have displayed—conduct worthy of men engaged in a cause so just and sacred, and deserving a nation's gratitude and praise."

In the pride and joy of the victory, and in the relief that the great army which had been thundering at the gates had been defeated and driven back, the people of the South took little account of the errors that had been committed by Lee's lieutenants, who were all gallant soldiers and able commanders. Yet it was due to these errors that

McClellan's army had been only routed, and not destroyed. And no one knew it so well as Lee. Had Jackson turned Porter's wing as planned, Hill's vast losses would not have occurred, and Porter could never have rejoined McClellan. Had Magruder and Huger not failed to discover that McClellan was retreating, he might never have crossed White Oak Swamp. Had Jackson made good his crossing at White Oak Swamp, McClellan would possibly not have had time to make his last stand at Malvern Hill, and might have lost his entire army. And finally, when Stuart, in advance of the rest of Lee's army, reached Evelington Heights and found McClellan's army lying beneath him on the low grounds, had he but waited until Longstreet came up, instead of firing on them with a bare section of light artillery, the end might have come that day. As it was, in his eagerness he did not wait, and Longstreet, whom he supposed close by, had taken another road.

## VIII

### LEE RELIEVES RICHMOND

LEE had thus in a month sprung almost to the full measure of fame. "After the Seven Days' Battles," says Henderson, "the war assumed a new aspect. . . . The strategy which had relieved Richmond recalled the masterstrokes of Napoleon."*

The government at Washington, which had on the 11th of July appointed Major-General Henry W. Halleck to the chief command of all the armies of the United States, had now determined to unite the forces of Fremont, Banks, and McDowell, though it was against the views of its principal advisers, including McClellan himself. Halleck's appointment followed immediately on a personal visit of Mr. Lincoln to McClellan's army on July 8, in which he ascertained that the army had 86,500 men present for duty, and 73,500 absent, and that the sentiment there was that 100,000 additional reinforcements were deemed necessary to march on Richmond with any hope of success.

* "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II, 109.

The general selected for the command was Major-General John Pope, an officer who was a distinguished graduate of West Point and who had achieved some success in the West. He had a self-confidence in which McClellan was somewhat wanting. He began by issuing a rodomontade which amused even his own army,* and he so inflamed the South by an order of banishment of all persons who would not take the oath of allegiance, and by threats of seizure of non-combatants as hostages,† and of confiscation of their property, that a note was prepared by the Confederate Government excepting Pope and his officers from the cartel just signed with McClellan for the exchange of prisoners of war. Lee himself appears to have regarded Pope with amused contempt. He wrote Jackson, "I want Pope suppressed," and in a letter to his wife (July 28, 1862) he writes her to tell his youngest son, then a private in the Rockbridge Artillery under Jackson, "to catch Pope for me, and also bring in his cousin, Louis Marshall, who, I am told, is on his staff." And he adds: "I could forgive the latter fighting against us, but not his joining Pope."

The question, now, was whether to reinforce McClellan or Pope, and Burnside, who had been

* Off. Rec., V, p. 552.

† General Orders 7 and 11.

brought up from the South, was held at Newport News, at the mouth of the James, awaiting the decision of the civilian commanders in Washington. In this decision Lee bore a conspicuous part.

Having assumed the offensive and won signal success, Lee was not a general to lose the fruit of his victory and be forced back into a defensive position, the perils of which he well knew. McClellan was routed and driven back to the shelter of his gunboats; but he was still within little more than a day's march of Richmond, with an army which, though demoralized, yet outnumbered Lee's, and was, in its position, still formidable.* And he could at any time cross to the south bank of the James and attack Richmond from that side and threaten the cutting off of communication with the South by the chief line of communication, the Richmond and Danville Railway, a move he urgently recommended, but as to which he was overruled by Halleck and the other authorities in Washington.† McDowell, too, a gallant soldier and gentleman, was still at Fredericksburg with a good part of the First Corps, and hungry for a

* McClellan's army, by his return of July 10, showed present and equipped for duty, 98,631 men. On July 10, General Lee's report showed that, exclusive of the troops in North Carolina, he had 64,419 men.

† Ropes, II, p. 238.

chance to atone for his disaster at Bull Run, and Pope, with another army greater than Lee could send against him, was advancing across the Piedmont, dating his letters from "Head-quarters in the saddle," and boasting that he never saw anything but the backs of his enemies, and that "if he had McClellan's army he would march to New Orleans." *

Major-General Pope, in command of the united armies of Fremont, Banks, and McDowell, had in all some 70,000 men. He now lay on the rolling uplands between the upper Rappahannock and the Rapidan, headed for Gordonsville. Pope had, as already stated, incurred the hatred of the South by his orders to seize and shoot non-combatants in reprisal for the acts of what he termed "roving bands," and only complete success would have excused the gasconade which he addressed to his army, lauding himself and reflecting on those gallant but unfortunate officers whom he had supplanted. The Confederate Government declared him outside of the pale.

If he should seize the Virginia Central Railroad he would destroy an important avenue with the South-west, and the one avenue of communication with the valley of Virginia. He was already on

* Pope gave his force as 43,000. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 86.

the Rapidan within a day's march of the important junction at Gordonsville, and a little later his cavalry burnt Beaver Dam Station, forty miles from Richmond. If he should unite with McClellan the South would be lost. The situation was not a whit less critical than it had been on the 1st of June, when McClellan was advancing by approaches to shell Richmond. Moreover, President Lincoln had already called for 300,000 more men.

But Lee was, of all men, the man to meet the situation. It might well be said of him as Condé and Turenne said of Merci, that he never lost a favorable moment, or failed to anticipate their most secret designs, as if he had assisted in their councils. He knew that the needle is not more sensitive to the proximity of steel than was the government at Washington to the moving of Stonewall Jackson in their direction. Jackson was in favor of invading Northern territory, and had avouched his readiness to follow any one who would fight. Lee knew his mettle and used it. When some one said to Jackson: "This new general needs your attention," his reply was: "And, please God, he shall have it." This was Lee's feeling also.

Let those who rank General Lee among the

defensive captains say whether he acted on the defensive or offensive when, leaving only some 20,000 men to guard Richmond, with McClellan still at Harrison's Landing, hurrying troops now to the south side of the James, now to Malvern Hill, he with rare audacity turned on Pope, advancing with threatenings and slaughter across the Piedmont, and sent Jackson to strike him beyond the Rapidan. And when, after the first stroke at Cedar Mountain, he sent him sweeping around in a great half circle through Thoroughfare Gap, struck him, at Groveton, a staggering blow, and facing him on the rolling plain of Manassas, routed and drove him back to the shelter of the forts around Alexandria, and then with his army, ill-clad and ill-shod, so threatened the national capital that McClellan was hastily recalled from the James to its defence.

After a rest of about ten days, spent in watching McClellan, who from time to time was moving troops up to Malvern Hill, or across the James, as if to renew his attack on Richmond, Lee addressed his attention to Pope. Pope, assured in his mind that he was on the march on Richmond, and boasting that with McClellan's force he "could march to New Orleans," pushed his army forward beyond Manassas, where he massed his supplies,

and on across the Rappahannock with the intention of seizing the important point, Gordonsville, where the Orange and Alexandria Railroad from Washington united with the Virginia Central Railroad, the line connecting Richmond with the valley of Virginia, and with the line running from Charlottesville to the South-west.

Lee's soldier's eye promptly saw the perilous situation in which Pope had placed himself, and his soldier's instinct promptly divined the means of striking him. Lee had now under him for Richmond's defence 64,419 men, exclusive of the force in North Carolina, while McClellan, at Harrison's Landing, had 98,631 men (July 10). He conceived the audacious design of massing his forces suddenly in Pope's front and, while he held him with a part, sending the remainder around his right wing to turn his flank and sever his line of communication. He felt sure that that would relieve Richmond, but he hoped also to destroy Pope. Thus, while with a portion of his depleted army he covered Richmond, he prepared a stroke which should shake Washington and relieve Richmond. On the 13th he despatched Jackson with his division and Ewell's—in all, some 11,000 men—to Gordonsville to confront Pope, who reported to Washington a week later that Ewell was at Gor-

donsville with 6,000 men, and Jackson at Louisa Court House, a short distance away, with 25,000 men. Pope heard of him first at Louisa, less than forty miles away. This sent Halleck off to consult McClellan in a hurry. McClellan thought he might have gone to the West to fight Buell. McClellan was strenuously urged by Halleck, who visited him for the purpose, to attack Richmond at once, and he assented provided he should be given 20,000 additional troops, which were promised him.

The effect of Lee's bold movement was what he anticipated. A week later Washington knew that Jackson had left Richmond, but had no idea whither he was bound; for Jackson divulged his plans not even to his chief of staff. Jackson, on his arrival at Gordonsville, finding himself confronted by an army many times his own in numbers, applied to Lee for reinforcements. He had but about 11,000 men. At first Lee felt unable to meet his demand, but when Pope's cavalry raiders struck the Virginia Central Railroad at Beaver Dam and cut his line of communication within forty miles of Richmond, he despatched Stuart and A. P. Hill to Jackson's aid. This brought his force up to 18,700, with which Lee expressed the hope that Pope might be "suppressed." Lee,

who knew Jackson's extreme reticence, and evidently thought it not always advantageous, wrote him to suggest his conferring with Hill, whom he recommended to him as "a good officer, with whom he could consult," adding, "and by advising with your division commanders as to your movements, much trouble will be saved you in arranging details, and they can act more intelligently. I wish to save you trouble from my increasing your command. *Cache* your troops as much as possible," he adds, "till you can strike your blow, and be prepared to return to me when done, if necessary. I will endeavor to keep General McClellan quiet till it is over, if rapidly executed."* Culpeper was the key to the situation, as several roads met there. So Jackson was to go to Culpeper. On the 9th of August Jackson, moving on Culpeper, attacked and defeated his old opponent, Banks, at Cedar Run, some twenty miles north of Gordonsville, and then withdrew toward Gordonsville to avoid attack by Pope's entire army until Lee should be ready to reinforce him. Pope wrote that he would have Gordonsville and Charlottesville in ten days. Washington, however, was in a panic. Burnside had been ordered up from the South to reinforce McClellan, who

* Lee to Jackson, July 27, 1862.

was clamoring for an additional 100,000 men; but he was still held at Newport News so that he "might move on short notice, one way or the other, where ordered." And on the 14th of August McClellan received orders from Washington to withdraw his army from the Peninsula for the protection of the national capital. Lee had already freed his mind of anxiety as to McClellan. As has been well said, he read him like an open book. He knew that for the present McClellan would give no more trouble on the Peninsula, and his quarry now was Pope. He wished to strike him swiftly before McClellan could join him. On the 13th day of August, Lee, having matured his plans and feeling secure as to Richmond, even though McClellan moved a division up to occupy Malvern Hill, as if to move again on Richmond, ordered Longstreet with Hood to Gordonsville, sending thither also R. H. Anderson, and going himself to take personal charge. He had thus massed quickly some 54,000 men ready for his stroke, leaving only two brigades for the defence of Richmond. But President Davis wrote him: "Confidence in you overcomes the view which would otherwise be taken.* Jackson was eager

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 254. Colonel William Allan, p. 199, n. 18, W. R., pp. 928, 945.

to attack at once, but Lee decided to wait till the men had sufficient supplies. On the 19th he issued his order for attack on the 20th. In the interval, however, a serious contretemps occurred which upset his well-conceived plan. Pope captured Stuart's adjutant-general * with a letter on his person from General Lee to General Stuart, setting forth fully his plans, and making manifest to Pope his position and force, and his determination to overwhelm the army under Pope before it could be reinforced by the Army of the Potomac. This accident Stuart offset partially a few days later, when, in a night attack at Catlett's Station, he captured Pope's head-quarters and effects, including his despatch-book, containing important information throwing light on the strength, movements, and designs of the enemy, and disclosing General Pope's own views against his ability to defend the line of the Rappahannock.† But Pope's despatches only made it appear imperative for Lee to attack him before the forces from McClellan and the Shenandoah should join him and make his army overwhelmingly strong. Lee's, on the other hand, enabled Pope to save his army and retire to a position behind the Rappahannock, where he could await these reinforcements.

* Major Fitzhugh. Pope's report.
† General Stuart's report, cited in Taylor's "General Lee."

This "fortunate accident" of the capture of Lee's letter containing his plans saved Pope for the time being. It was a revelation to him, and suddenly aware of the peril of his position, he hastily withdrew behind the Rappahannock, thereby preventing the cutting off of his army from his base of supplies as Lee had planned. "This retreat," says Ropes in his history of the campaign, "was made not a day too soon. Pope's army had been, in truth, in an extremely dangerous position. . . . All this is very plain, but apparently it was not seen by General Pope until the capture of one of the officers of Stuart's staff put him in possession of Lee's orders to his army.* Lee was greatly disappointed at Pope's escape," continues this able critic,† and he proceeds to show how, had Pope not retreated precipitately, he "would have been attacked in flank and rear, and his communications severed into the bargain. Doubtless," he adds, "he would have made a strenuous fight, but defeat under such circumstances might well have been ruin. From this disaster fortune saved Pope through the capture of Stuart's staff officer."‡

The credit for this brilliant conception of de-

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," pp. 256, 257.
† Lee to Jackson, July 23, 1862, W. R., p. 916.
‡ Ropes, II, pp. 257, 258.

stroying Pope, Henderson rather gives to Jackson; but no matter who originated the idea, the true credit, as he shows in another connection, belongs to him on whom rested the responsibility of the final decision on which hangs the fate of the cause. This decision Lee made, and when he arrived in the Piedmont he held to his decision, though Pope had withdrawn his army to a far more defensible line than when he thought of pursuing Jackson to Gordonsville. Having satisfied himself as to Pope's dispositions, Lee, unswerving in his audacious design, determined to attack him beyond the Rappahannock, where he lay on the left bank, on both sides of the Orange and Alexandria Railway, awaiting his reinforcements. Thus, while Longstreet was directed to hold his front, Jackson was sent up the stream to cross beyond Pope at some point and turn his right. This plan left Pope between Lee and Richmond, but Lee had no fears on this score; for it left him between Pope and Washington, and if he were successful, Pope would not be trying to capture Richmond, but to save his army. Stuart, under cover of the artillery, forced a passage at Beverly Ford, some miles above the railroad, but was forced to withdraw, and Jackson marched on higher up the river in pursuance of Lee's order,

to "seek a more favorable place to cross," and on the afternoon of the 22d reached the Sulphur Springs. A great rain, however, fell that night and raised the river suddenly after he had sent Early with a brigade or two across, leaving them isolated and preventing their relief for several days. This rain, in Ropes's opinion, saved Pope, who was now strictly on the defensive, and was being encouraged by Halleck to "fight like the devil."* Meantime Longstreet, on the 23d, drove off the force guarding the railroad bridge at Rappahannock Station and the bridge was burned.

It was after five days spent in trying to reach Pope's right beyond the swollen Rappahannock, that Lee put in operation his famous flank movement by which, holding Pope's front with half his force, he despatched Jackson, together with a part of Stuart's Cavalry, to circle quite around Pope's right and, crossing the Bull Run Mountains, at Thoroughfare Gap, strike his line of communication in his rear. Considering that Pope had under him, on the Rappahannock, an army which, making allowance for all losses, "numbered upward of 70,000 when Lee undertook this novel and perilous operation," one may well agree with Ropes that "the disparity between this force and that of

* *Ibid.*, II, pp. 259, 260. 16, W. R., pp. 56, 57.

Jackson is so enormous that it is impossible not to be amazed at the audacity of the Confederate general."*

Lee, however, was now assured of the withdrawal of McClellan's army as a consequence of his audacious strategy in threatening Washington, and having massed his forces with a view to attacking Pope, he proceeded to carry out his plans, however "novel and perilous," undisturbed by any forebodings. Almost due north of where Pope lay protected by the Rappahannock, beginning a few miles north of Sulphur Springs, just above Pope's right, and running due north and south, lies a range of low mountains, forming an outlying wing of the Blue Ridge. In this range of mountains are several gaps through which wind rough country roads. But most of these gaps lay too near Pope's army to be attempted with any hope of success. One of them, however, lay so far to the northward that it had not been considered necessary to secure it. Lee's plan now was to send Jackson and Stuart around to the westward of this range as far as Thoroughfare Gap, and have them cross the range at this point and attack Pope in the rear, cutting and, if possible, destroying his line of communications. And meanwhile

* *Ibid.*, II, pp. 261, 262. Allan, pp. 212, 213.

Longstreet was to keep him occupied and then, stealing away, was to follow Jackson by the same route and join him for the purpose of attack or defence, as circumstances should develop. The plan worked out in a way which has become one of the romantic stories of the history of war. Sending Jackson up the now swollen stream to find a crossing-place well beyond Pope's right, and Longstreet after him to demonstrate in Pope's front and follow Jackson at the proper time, Lee awaited confidently the result of his audacious plan. Jackson withdrew to Jefferson, a few miles south-west of Sulphur Springs, on the evening of the 24th, and Longstreet took his place after dark. Next day, while Longstreet demonstrated as if preparing to cross at Waterloo and Sulphur Springs, Jackson, starting from Jefferson, crossed the river at a point four miles above Waterloo. Keeping to the west of the mountains, he marched twenty-five miles a day, bivouacked at Salem, and pushing forward with "his accustomed vigor and celerity," crossed the Bull Run Mountains at Thoroughfare Gap, and, finding the way clear, headed straight for the line of Pope's communication at the rear of his army. At Gainesville, on the day after he started, he was joined by Stuart with two brigades of cavalry. Here, after a

record-making march, about nightfall, on the 26th, while Pope thought he was headed for the valley of the Shenandoah,* Jackson, having circled completely around Warrenton, where Pope had his head-quarters, struck the railway at Bristoe Station between Pope and the city he was supposed to be covering. Here he destroyed the bridge across Broad Run, which rendered him safe for the time being from an attack from the direction of Warrenton, and then turned his attention to the capture of Pope's great depot of supplies. He despatched Stuart that night with his cavalry and two of Trimble's regiments, who though they had marched twenty-five miles that day had volunteered for the occasion, to capture Manassas Junction, six miles away, with its vast stores for Pope's army, which was successfully accomplished by midnight, the captures including two batteries of artillery and some 300 prisoners. Next morning, leaving Ewell to guard Bristoe Station, Jackson proceeded to Manassas, where he was joined later by Ewell, who had been forced back from Bristoe Station after a sharp fight, and who brought the information that Pope had turned on him with his full force. That morning Pope had issued orders to abandon the line of the Rappahannock.†

*18, W. R., pp. 653, 665.
†16, W. R., pp. 34, 70. Ropes, II, p. 266.

Ewell's retreat had far-reaching consequences. Pope at first thought that the attack on Manassas was a mere cavalry raid, and when he learned differently and sent a sufficient force to Bristoe Station to drive Ewell off, he conceived the idea that he had defeated Jackson's whole army. He was afterward to learn that this was an even more fatal mistake than the first. That same night Pope, who appears to have thought that his enemy was delivered into his hands, issued orders for his entire army to concentrate at or near Manassas Junction, and a manifesto that he would "bag the whole crowd." Jackson had other views. Lee's plan had not stopped at the destruction of Pope's supplies. He proposed also the destruction of his army. If Pope should be allowed to retire on Washington and await the arrival of McClellan's army, the chief object of his daring move would have been frustrated. This Jackson understood. Having now refreshed his men, he proposed to carry out the main purpose of his perilous move. While Pope was concentrating to bag him at Manassas, Jackson, under cover of darkness, left that point, and marching up Bull Run beyond where Sigel lay to participate in the work of bagging him, moved on the night of the 27th to the westward of the turnpike and took a position in the woods near Groveton, where he could await Long-

street's arrival by way of Thoroughfare Gap, or himself retire through either this gap or Aldie Gap, to the northward, should necessity arise. His army comprised only about 18,000 men, but it was a fighting force unexcelled in history.

On the afternoon of the 28th, Jackson, lying in the hills near Groveton, almost surrounded by Pope's army, learned that a large force was moving down the turnpike toward Centreville, where Pope had finally determined to concentrate. This was King's division of McDowell's command, which was on its way to help bag him at Manassas. He immediately sprang upon them, and the result was one of the most obstinately contested of the minor fields of the war.* The losses on both sides were heavy; for on both sides the men fought from start to finish with extraordinary gallantry. The Confederate losses were the heaviest, however, and among the 1,200 or more casualties was the gallant old Ewell, who was desperately wounded. Pope, obsessed with the idea that Jackson was trying to escape, issued an order stating that McDowell had intercepted his retreat, and with Sigel on his front he could not escape. That night, however, the Federals withdrew and retired toward Manassas, and next day

* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 149.

it was known that Pope "had taken a position to cover Washington against Jackson's advance." Strategically, however, the engagement was decisive. Jackson had brought on the fight with the view of drawing the whole Federal army on himself, and he was entirely successful.* Thus, this part of Lee's plan had been completely carried out. Jackson, knowing that there was stern work ahead of him, now posted himself in a defensive position partially protected by the line of an unfinished railway extending north-eastwardly from the Warrenton Turnpike, and awaited Longstreet (with whom was Lee himself), who, having been relieved by R. H. Anderson, had crossed the river at Hinson's Mill, the same point where Jackson had crossed several days before, and was pushing forward for Thoroughfare Gap, which he reached on the afternoon of the 28th. Ricketts had been posted here till he was ordered away to help bag Jackson, but a force still occupied the Gap. Finding the Gap in possession of the enemy, Longstreet was forced to carry it by assault, and did not reach Jackson till the following afternoon. But though he had been delayed, he was in time for the final struggle, and Lee's masterly strategy was justified.

* Allan, p. 231. Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, pp. 179, 235. Ropes, II, p. 272.

It was well that he had carried the pass, for Pope had brought up all his army to crush Jackson. It is agreed that the removal of Ricketts' command from the Gap to help bag Jackson was a cardinal error. Lee had had tidings from Jackson as late as the 26th, saying that he was able to maintain himself till support should arrive. But he knew the peril of his position, and he was eager to relieve him. As he now with Longstreet's command emerged from the Gap next morning (29th) the sound of the guns toward Manassas, twelve miles away, told that the battle was on and that Jackson was fighting for his life. It, however, told precisely where Jackson was, and this guided them to the field where Pope's army, now being massed for his destruction, was being led against his well-chosen position. Jackson fought along the line of an unfinished railway embankment, with his artillery on a ridge behind him, his left secured by Bull Run and by Stuart's Cavalry, his right by the cavalry and the commanding artillery posted behind him. Hill was on his left in three lines, Ewell's Division on his centre and right. The battle began by an attack on his centre and left about seven o'clock, and from this time till sunset it raged along the whole field.

Pushing forward by Gainesville, Longstreet

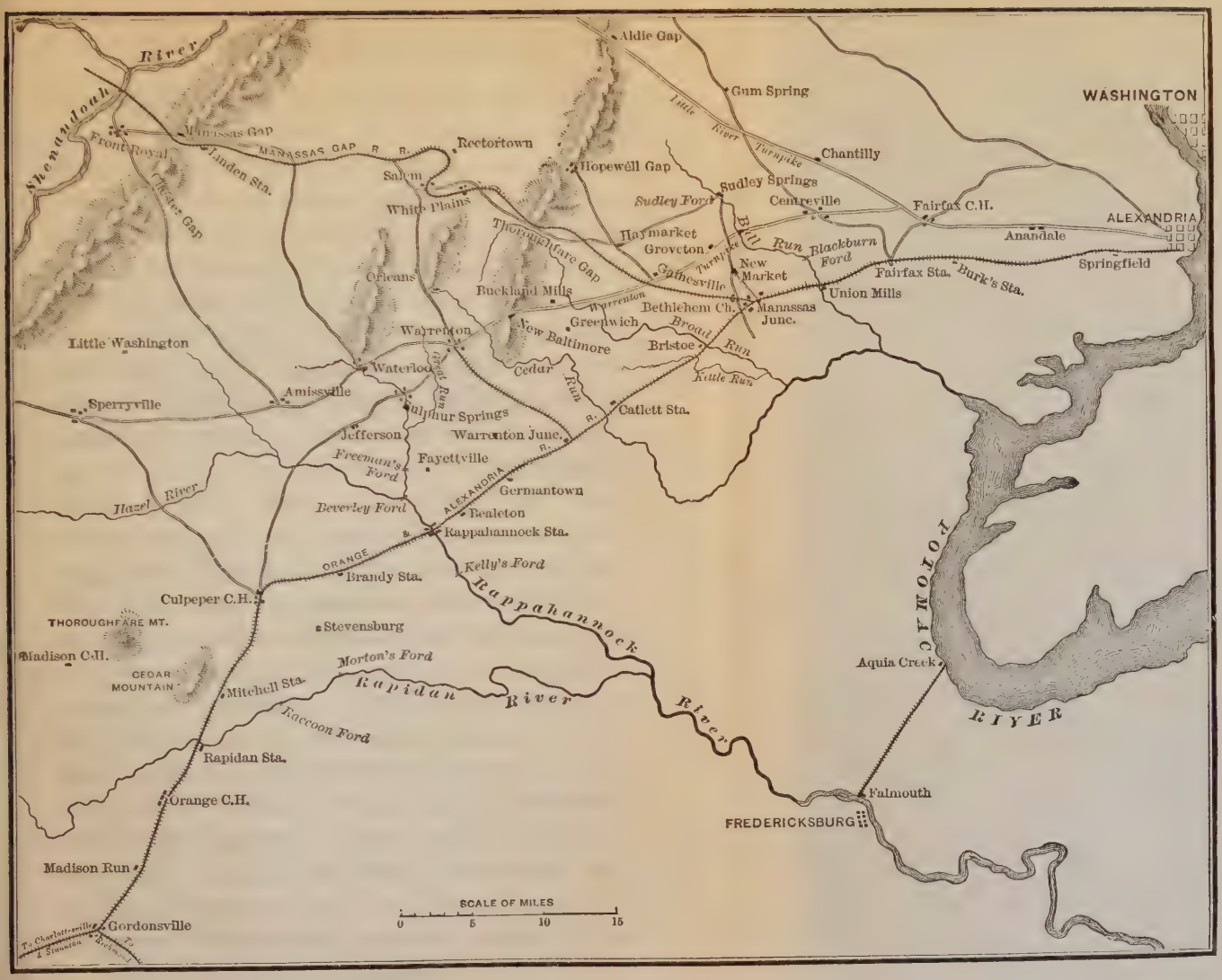
moved to Jackson's right, where Porter, guarding the enemy's left, lay beyond him to his right. The battle had been raging for hours when Lee reached the field. Sigel, eager to settle old valley scores, was striving to hold Jackson in check until Pope could concentrate his full force to destroy him. His attack on Jackson's left, fierce as it was, had failed, though once for a short space Hill's first line had been broken, and it required all his reserves to re-establish it. Hooker had now come up on Pope's right with Kearny and Reno—some 18,000 men, fresh and full of fight—and McDowell and Porter were ordered to come in on his left and roll up Jackson's centre and right and thus sweep the field. This Pope, who had now taken personal command, had no doubt of being able to do. He reckoned, however, without his host. Lee had now come up with Longstreet, and Jackson knew that his long-cherished design had reached fulfilment. Other corps were soon put in, and for hours the battle raged "with incessant fury and varying success, but Jackson stubbornly held his ground, though the fighting was often hand to hand and the bayonet was in constant requisition."* In all this fighting Longstreet took little part, though Lee himself three times expressed to

* Taylor's "General Lee," p. 106.

him his wish that he should attack and thus relieve the hard-pressed Jackson. As General Lee did not positively order him in, he determined to wait and attack next day, should a weak place be found in the enemy's lines, and he left Jackson and Hill to hold their position alone, except for the aid afforded them by a reconnoissance in force by three gallant brigades—Hood's and Evan's, with Wilcox in support. The command of Fitz John Porter, numbering some 10,000 men, lay near Gainesville, deployed to engage any force in their front, and Longstreet thought the enemy was marching on him from the rear and failed to press in to Jackson's aid. When evening fell Porter's menace had held Longstreet back from the counterstroke which Lee had desired to give, and he could not have done more had he attempted to carry out Pope's urgent last order. Thus Porter, notwithstanding the stern charges made against him later and their fatal result, fully performed his task.* Lee knew next morning that he need not deliver the attack he had contemplated—that Pope would save him the trouble. Fortunately for Lee, he knew also that Pope thought Jackson was in a perilous position and was anxious only to escape, and he disposed his troops to take advan-

* Ropes, II, p. 281.

tage of this erroneous view, which he did completely. Pope, who, notwithstanding five successive repulses and the loss of some 8,000 men, claimed to have won the battle of the evening before, was still laboring under "the strange hallucination" that Jackson was in full retreat, and he massed his army to destroy or "bag" him, giving McDowell the "general charge of the pursuit." Such a pursuit was never known before or since. He did not believe that Longstreet had arrived, though Porter had warned him of the fact, and while he was informed that troops had passed through Thoroughfare Gap the day before, he was confident that they were Jackson's troops in retreat. He had now some 65,000 men directly under his hand, and he not unnaturally felt able to crush any force opposed to him. Accordingly, having placed his army in a position to sweep the whole field at once, he, about noon, gave the order to advance. Porter had been moved over to the right, and Reynolds was on the left facing Longstreet. Pope was certain of victory and moved deliberately. Thus, it was afternoon before Pope's gallant lines advanced to the attack along the Warrenton Pike, with Porter leading against Jackson's front in such force that Jackson called on Lee for reinforcements. Lee immediately ordered




General Map of the Country Around Manassas Junction

General Longstreet in, and his whole line became engaged from Jackson's left, stretching to Bull Run, on the north of the turnpike, to Stuart's Hill, on the south, where Longstreet's right extended, with Stuart on his right. The guns massed behind swept the open space before Lee's lines and made them a field of death. Supposing still that the force in front was but a part of Jackson's army left to guard his retreat, Pope was taken by surprise when from the railway an army arose and poured a deadly fire on his advancing ranks. But never did brave men meet braver. Driven back by the deadly blast, the assailants rallied again and again till five assaults had been made. The fighting was from this time furious. Line after line came on under the leaden sleet with a courage which aroused the admiration of their antagonists and called for the utmost exertion to repel them. But mortal flesh could not stand against the rain of shot and shell poured down on the brigades "piling up against Jackson's right, centre, and left,"* and they melted away in the fiery furnace. "Their repeated efforts to rally were," as Lee reported, "unavailing, and Jackson's troops, being thus relieved from the pressure of overwhelming numbers, began to press

* Lee's report, Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 112, 113.

steadily forward, driving the enemy before them." As they retreated in confusion Lee ordered a general advance; but "Longstreet, anticipating the order for a general advance, now threw his whole command against the Federal centre and left, and the whole line swept steadily on, driving the enemy with great carnage from each successive position." It is a modest and uncolored report of the general movements made by the victorious commander. The victory viewed in the light of all the facts was one of the most complete in all the war. "As Porter rolled back from Jackson's front," says Henderson, "the hand of a great captain snatched control of the battle from Pope." Lee had seen his opportunity and thrown his whole army on the retreating foe in one supreme and masterly counterstroke. The result was a victory, complete and overwhelming.

Yet, even thus, Pope "with an audacity which disaster was powerless to tame," reported to Halleck that "the enemy was badly whipped," and that he had "moved back because he was largely outnumbered," and his army was without food. In fact, Pope's army was in rout; when Franklin arrived on the 30th, he found it necessary to throw a division across the road between Centreville and Bull Run to stop the "indiscriminate

mass of men, horses, and guns, and wagons, all going pell-mell to the rear. Officers of all grades," he states, "from brigadier-generals down, were in the throng." When McClellan took charge on the 2d he placed the stragglers at 20,000, and Halleck's messenger placed them at 30,000.

Thus by Lee's "novel and perilous movement," carried out to complete success, was won the great battle of Second Manassas, which completed the campaign by which he relieved Richmond.

With 50,000 men he had routed and driven Pope from his menacing position with (as Ropes states) 70,000 men, as gallant as any soldiers in the world, captured more than 9,000 prisoners, 30 pieces of artillery, upward of 20,000 stand of small arms, numerous colors, and a large amount of stores.*

During the night Pope withdrew to the north side of Bull Run and occupied a strong position on the heights about Centreville. But by this time the hunter had become the hunted. Lee, driving for the fruits of his dearly won victory, ordered Jackson to push forward around Pope's right, while Longstreet engaged him in front, and Pope,

* Lee's report, cited in Taylor's "General Lee," p. 117. The Federal losses were 1,738 killed and 10,135 wounded. Confederate losses, 1,090 killed and 6,154 wounded. Pope had certainly over 70,000 men. See Ropes, cited *ante*. Henderson places his forces at 80,000.

now thoroughly demoralized, retired first on Fairfax Court House, and after a sharp engagement with Jackson at Chantilly, to the secure shelter of the formidable forts at Alexandria. Lee says in his report that "it was found that the enemy had conducted his retreat so rapidly that the attempt to interfere with him was abandoned. The proximity of the fortifications around Alexandria and Washington rendered further pursuit useless." In this last fight the brave Kearny was killed. Having ridden into the Confederate lines by accident, he was shot as he attempted to escape.

"Lee, with his extraordinary insight into character," says Henderson,* "had played on Pope as he had played on McClellan, and his strategy was justified by success. In the space of three weeks he had carried the war from the James to the Potomac; with an army that at no time exceeded 55,000 men, he had driven 80,000 men into the fortifications of Washington." It was a proof of Pope's utter demoralization that he telegraphed that unless something were "done to restore the tone of his army, it would melt away," and that he attacked as the cause of his disaster the gallant Fitz John Porter with a vehemence which might better have been employed on the

* "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 187.

field of Manassas, and placed on this fine soldier and honorable gentleman a stigma which it took a generation to extirpate.

In any event, it was the end of the gascon, Pope. He was transferred to the North-west to hold the Indians in awe, and before a great while resigned. Such was the fruit of Lee's bold generalship, and he was now to give a yet further proof of his audacity and skill.

## IX

### LEE'S AUDACITY—ANTIETAM TO CHANCELLORSVILLE

LEE'S move against Pope was not merely the boldest, and possibly the most masterly, piece of strategy in the whole war; it was, as has been well said, "one of the most brilliant and daring movements in the history of wars." He was already beginning to be confronted by the enemy before which his victorious legions were finally to succumb. The region which had hitherto been the seat of war had been swept so clean and the means of transportation had become so unreliable that it was necessary for the subsistence of his army, if for no other reason, to shift the field of operations. But though the South had lost a year in its refusal to do more than defend its own borders, the exigencies of war made it apparent that this theory must be abandoned if success were to be sought. Another motive also now operated with Lee. Three armies had been defeated, and the only reply that the Union Government had made had been to call for more troops from her

inexhaustible resources. It was possible that a victorious invasion of the North might force the North to make peace. Such a move might bring about the recognition of the Southern Confederacy by Great Britain and France, and this would open her ports and give her access to the world. Or it might compel the North to make peace. But the immediate cause operating with Lee was the necessity to relieve Virginia and subsist his men. Accordingly he did not pause to enjoy his victory. His army was wellnigh shoeless, and the South was unable to help him. Need became the handmaid of strategy. He was nearer to Washington than to Richmond. Maryland lay the other side of Pope's army. He would place that army and the other armies also between him and Richmond. He determined to march around Pope's army and invade Maryland to subsist his army and relieve Virginia, and to give Maryland the power to join the Southern Confederacy, which it was believed she longed to do.

Lee, therefore, who, as we have seen, had, in the beginning of the war, held that the South should act strictly on the defensive, now, after the war had proceeded for more than a year, reached a different conclusion. For what appeared good reasons, he made up his mind that he should ad-

vance into Maryland. Probably he felt that Maryland was properly a part of the South, and he so indicates in his correspondence. Before taking this step, however, he wrote the following letter to President Davis, giving him his reasons for the move:

HEAD-QUARTERS, ALEXANDRIA AND LEESBURG ROAD, NEAR DRANESVILLE,

*September* 3, 1862.

HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT DAVIS.

*Mr. President:* The present seems to be the most propitious time since the commencement of the war for the Confederate army to enter Maryland. The two grand armies of the United States that have been operating in Virginia, though now united, are much weakened and demoralized. Their new levies, of which I understand 60,000 men have already been posted in Washington, are not yet organized, and will take some time to prepare for the field. If it is ever desired to give material aid to Maryland and afford her an opportunity of throwing off the oppression to which she is now subject, this would seem the most favorable.

After the enemy had disappeared from the vicinity of Fairfax Court House and taken the road to Alexandria and Washington, I did not think it would be advantageous to follow him farther. I had no intention of attacking him in his fortifications, and am not prepared to invest them. If I

possessed the necessary munitions, I should be unable to supply provisions for the troops. I therefore determined, while threatening the approaches to Washington, to draw the troops into Loudoun, where forage and some provisions can be obtained, menace their possession of the Shenandoah Valley, and, if found practicable, to cross into Maryland. The purpose, if discovered, will have the effect of carrying the enemy north of the Potomac, and if prevented will not result in much evil.

The army is not properly equipped for an invasion of an enemy's territory. It lacks much of the material of war, is feeble in transportation, the animals being much reduced, and the men are poorly provided with clothes, and in thousands of instances are destitute of shoes. Still, we cannot afford to be idle, and, though weaker than our opponents in men and military equipments, must endeavor to harass if we cannot destroy them. I am aware that the movement is attended with much risk, yet I do not consider success impossible, and shall endeavor to guard it from loss. As long as the army of the enemy is employed on this frontier I have no fears for the safety of Richmond, yet I earnestly recommend that advantage be taken of this period of comparative safety to place its defence, both by land and water, in the most perfect condition. A respectable force can be collected to defend its approaches by land, and the steamer *Richmond*, I hope, is now ready to clear the river of hostile vessels.

Should General Bragg find it impracticable to

operate to advantage on his present frontier, his army, after leaving sufficient garrisons, could be advantageously employed in opposing the overwhelming numbers which it seems to be the intention of the enemy now to concentrate in Virginia.

I have already been told by prisoners that some of Buell's cavalry have been joined to General Pope's army, and have reason to believe that the whole of McClellan's, the larger portion of Burnside's and Cox's, and a portion of Hunter's are united to it.

What occasions me most concern is the fear of getting out of ammunition. I beg you will instruct the Ordnance Department to spare no pains in manufacturing a sufficient amount of the best kind, and to be particular, in preparing that for the artillery, to provide three times as much of the long-range ammunition as of that for smooth-bore or short-range guns. The points to which I desire the ammunition to be forwarded will be made known to the department in time. If the Quartermaster's Department can furnish any shoes, it would be the greatest relief. We have entered upon September, and the nights are becoming cool.

I have the honor to be, with high respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

Another motive also operated with Lee in causing him to advance into Maryland. He desired peace, and he felt now as he felt when he again

crossed the Potomac in the following year that such a move might lead to peace with honor. On the 8th of September he wrote President Davis the following letter:

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEAR FREDERICKTOWN, MD.,
*September* 8, 1862.

HIS EXCELLENCY, JEFFERSON DAVIS,
*President of the Confederate States, Richmond, Va.*

*Mr. President:* The present position of affairs, in my opinion, places it in the power of the government of the Confederate States to propose with propriety to that of the United States the recognition of our independence. For more than a year both sections of the country have been devastated by hostilities which have brought sorrow and suffering upon thousands of homes without advancing the objects which our enemies proposed to themselves in beginning the contest. Such a proposition, coming from us at this time, could in no way be regarded as suing for peace, but, being made when it is in our power to inflict injury upon our adversary, would show conclusively to the world that our sole object is the establishment of our independence and the attainment of an honorable peace. The rejection of this offer would prove to the country that the responsibility of the continuance of the war does not rest upon us, but that the party in power in the United States elect

to prosecute it for purposes of their own. The proposal of peace would enable the people of the United States to determine at their coming elections whether they will support those who favor a prolongation of the war or those who wish to bring it to a termination which can but be productive of good to both parties without affecting the honor of either.

I have the honor to be, with high respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

On the 2d of September, amid the gloom cast by Pope's disastrous defeat, McClellan was requested by Mr. Lincoln to take command of the defence of Washington, and at once took command of Pope's shattered army. On the same day Lee issued his order to cross the Potomac, and, screened by Stuart's Cavalry, Jackson, whose corps was to form the advance, headed for the fords above Leesburg. It had been hoped, as Lee's letters show, that Maryland would rise and declare for the South. Maryland did not respond. Her population who espoused the cause of the South lay mainly to the eastward. Her western population were affected by the proximity to the mountain population of Virginia. However, her Legislature had been arrested, and the machinery of her government had been thrown out of gear.

Henderson suggests a further reason for this indifference on the part of her people in the uninviting appearance of Lee's ragged soldiery. Moreover, they were accustomed to the Federal occupation, and it was a hazardous experiment to side actively with the South unless she should first show herself able to protect them. Lee issued a proclamation on the 8th, calling on the people to rise and enjoy once more the inalienable rights of freemen; but assuring them that no constraint would be put on them by his army and no intimidation would be allowed. He declared it was for them to decide their destiny freely and without restraint, and that his army would respect their choice, whatever it might be.* Thus reassured, Maryland remained quiescent. Those who espoused the South's cause had long since crossed the border and shed their blood on many a hard-fought field. The remainder continued neutral. This, however, was not the cause of Lee's failure. That he did not reap the full fruits of this wonderful generalship was due to one of those strange events which, so insignificant in itself, yet under Him who

"Views with equal eye, as God of All,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,"

* F. Lee's "Lee," p. 198.

is fateful to decide the issues of nations. McClellan moved to Frederick, on the east side of South Mountain, two days after Lee crossed to the westward. As the capture of Lee's letter and plans had given Pope warning and led him to retire his army behind the Rappahannock in time to save it, so now an even stranger fate befell Lee. A copy of his despatch giving his entire plan was picked up at Frederick, wrapped about a handful of cigars, on the site of a camp formerly occupied by D. H. Hill, and promptly reached McClellan, thus betraying to him a plan which but for this strange accident might have resulted in the complete overthrow of his army, and even in the capture of the national capital, and enabling him with his vast resources to frustrate it. A man's carelessness usually reacts mainly upon himself, but few incidents in the history of the world have ever been fraught with such fateful consequences as that act of the unknown staff officer or courier who chose Lee's plan of battle as a wrapping for his tobacco.

"If we always had exact information of our enemy's dispositions," said Frederick, "we should beat him every time." This exact information this strange mishap gave to Lee's adversary on the eve of Antietam. Even so, Lee, who fought the

battle with only 35,000 men, came off with more glory than his antagonist, who had 87,000,* as gallant men, moreover, as ever braved death, and the latter was a little later removed by his government as a failure, while Lee stood higher than ever in the affection and esteem of the South. Lee's plan was to march into Maryland to the west of Washington, and inclining to the north-eastward, threaten at once Baltimore and Washington, and incidentally Pennsylvania. His first objective was Hagerstown, Md., an important junction point due north of Harper's Ferry. It was expected that this line of march would naturally clear the Shenandoah Valley of the troops which had been harrying it. It had been supposed that as soon as this move was made the troops garrisoning Harper's Ferry, numbering some 10,000 men, would be withdrawn, as Johnston had done when Patterson moved south in 1861. When the commander at Harper's Ferry still held on, it became necessary to dislodge or capture him. Lee decided on the latter course and despatched Jackson to capture him, while he pushed on into Maryland.

* General Lee told Fitz Lee that he fought the battle of Sharpsburg with 35,000 troops. And McClellan reported that he himself had 87,164 troops. (Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 209.) *Cf.* also Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, pp. 376, 377.

His disposition of his forces, which McClellan got information of on the 13th of September, was as follows: Jackson, whose troops formed the advance, was to turn off from the Hagerstown Road, after passing Middletown, take the Sharpsburg Road, cross the Potomac at the most convenient place, and by Friday night (September 12) seize the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, round up and capture the troops at Martinsburg to the west of Harper's Ferry—some 3,000 men—and then proceed to capture Harper's Ferry itself. Longstreet was to proceed to Boonsboro, on the Hagerstown Road; McLaws was to follow him to Middletown and then, following Jackson, with his own and Anderson's Divisions was to seize the Maryland Heights, commanding Harper's Ferry, by Friday night, and proceed to aid in the capture of Harper's Ferry. General Walker, with his division, was to seize Loudoun Heights on the south side of the Shenandoah River, and as far as practicable co-operate with Jackson and McLaws in intercepting the retreat of the enemy. General D. H. Hill's Division was to form the rear guard of the main army. Stuart was to send detachments of cavalry with these troops, and with the main body of his cavalry was to cover the route of the main army and bring up stragglers. After

the capture of Harper's Ferry the troops engaged there were to join the main army.

It will be seen that Lee had no doubt whatever of the success of his undertaking. Both he and Jackson knew Harper's Ferry and the surrounding country, and his plan, so simple and yet so complete, was laid out with a precision as absolute as if formed on the ground instead of on the march in a new country. It was this order showing the dispersion of his army over twenty-odd miles of country, with a river flowing between its widely scattered parts, that by a strange fate fell in McClellan's hands.

Lee's order was discovered and delivered to McClellan on the 13th, and McClellan at once set himself to the task of meeting the situation by relieving Harper's Ferry on the one hand and crushing Lee's army in detail among the passes of the Maryland Spurs. Lee, however, had, through the good offices of a friendly citizen who had been present at or had learned of the delivery of his despatch to McClellan, soon become aware of the misfortune that had befallen him, and while McClellan was preparing to destroy him, he was taking prompt measures to repair the damage as fully as possible. He promptly informed his lieutenants and instantly recalled Longstreet from Hagers-

town, ordered Hill back to Turner's Gap and Stuart to Crampton Gap, five miles south, to defend them against McClellan's expected advance, a disposition which delayed the enemy until the evening of the 14th, when, after fierce fighting, they carried both positions, forcing McLaws back from Crampton Gap to Pleasant Valley, across which, however, he established "a formidable line of defence." Lee was thus forced to choose between two alternatives—either to retreat across the Potomac or to fight where he had not contemplated fighting. He seems to have wavered momentarily which course to adopt, and well he might waver. It was a perilous situation. He had with him, by the highest computation, when the gaps were stormed on the afternoon of the 14th, only about 19,000 men in all,* "while the main army of McClellan was close upon him." He issued an order that night (8 P. M.) to McLaws to cross the Potomac below Shepherdstown, leaving the ford at Shepherdstown for the main army to take. "But in less than two hours Lee had changed his mind—why we are not informed" —says Ropes, "and had determined to await battle north of the Potomac." By midnight he had planned his battle; he had ordered the cavalry

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 347.

to pilot McLaws over the mountains and across country to Sharpsburg, where he had determined to make his stand on the east of Antietam Creek. He had also taken measures to bring up his other troops as rapidly as possible. "This decision," says Ropes, "to stand and fight at Sharpsburg, which General Lee took on the evening of the 14th of September—just after his troops had been driven from the South Mountain passes—is beyond controversy one of the boldest and most hazardous decisions in his whole military career. It is, in truth, so bold and hazardous that one is bewildered that he could even have thought seriously of making it."*

Lee's decision was, indeed, so bold and hazardous that the thoughtful Ropes suggests that he must have been influenced by fear of loss of his military prestige. "General Lee, however," he admits, "thought there was a fair chance for him to win a victory over McClellan," † and he adds that "naturally he did not consider them [McClellan's troops] as good as his own, and it is without doubt that they did not constitute so good an army as that which he commanded."

We have seen what his motives were on crossing over into Maryland. His design now was to

* *Ibid.*, pp. 351, 352. † *Ibid.*, II, p. 349.

cover McLaws's rear at Harper's Ferry, prevent the relief of that place, draw his army together in a strong, defensive position, and await McClellan's attack. We know, however, that while Longstreet (as usual) suggested the obstacles and dangers of the situation, Jackson approved the action of Lee both before and after the battle.*

The eastern range of the Blue Ridge in Maryland follows the general trend of the Appalachians from south-west to north-east, and north of the Potomac are known as the South Mountain. To the westward lies a rolling country with pleasant valleys through which wind small streams which flow southward into the Potomac. Up these valleys and up the ridges which divide them wind the roads northward, which Lee was following when he learned of the mishap that had befallen him in the discovery of his plans. It was a perilous situation, for McClellan with 80,000 troops lay on the other side of the South Mountain at Frederick, within a day's march of his small force, and the passes were defended by only D. H. Hill's Division and the cavalry; while Longstreet was at Hagerstown, twelve miles beyond Boonsboro, and Jackson with Walker and McLaws was still engaged in the work of capturing Harper's Ferry,

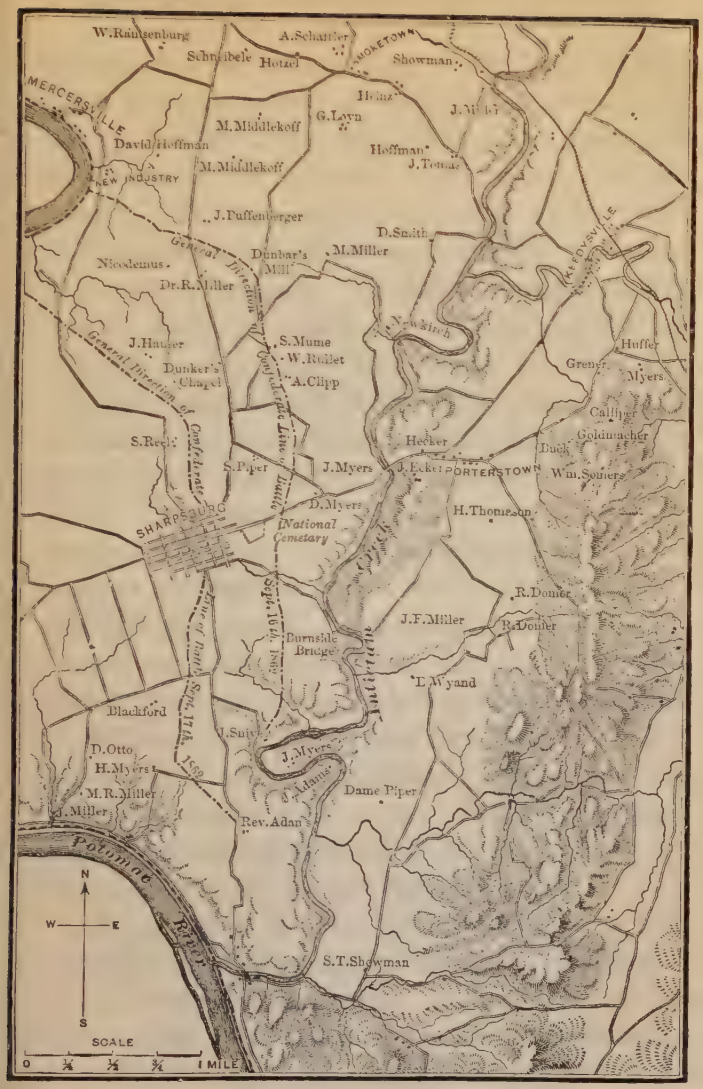
* Lee's letter to Mrs. Jackson, January 15, 1866.

on the other side of the Potomac. The stoutest heart might well have quailed. But Lee stood firm. He knew both Jackson and McClellan, and he acted with undaunted resolution. Instead of retreating across the Potomac as Longstreet suggested, he ordered the passes of the South Mountain to be defended, recalled Longstreet to his aid, and retiring to a position on the Antietam, prepared for battle with the Potomac at his back, while he awaited Jackson. Fortunately for Lee, his surmise based on McClellan's known caution proved correct. McClellan did not attack the troops posted in the passes until afternoon on the 14th, the day that Jackson invested Harper's Ferry, and then he threw the bulk of his force, 70,000 men, against the northernmost gap, and the one nearest Longstreet, so that by the time his attack became general—four o'clock—Longstreet had reached the field, and at nightfall Turner's Gap was still in Lee's possession. The Southern Gap, known as Crampton's Gap, defended by the gallant Munford with only his cavalry, dismounted, and a regiment of infantry, had been carried at five o'clock by Franklin, and that night Franklin, established at the top of the mountain, might with reasonable assistance have commanded the direct line of communication be-

tween Lee and Jackson. That night, however, Longstreet and Hill abandoned Turner's Gap, their position being no longer tenable, and fell back to Sharpsburg above the Antietam, and Franklin was held at bay by McLaws's bold front and called for reinforcements, though the latter had only six brigades in line, not over 6,000 men, to Franklin's 20,000.* The losses of the Confederates on this day were in all about 3,400 men, while of the Federals they were probably a thousand less. Jackson, Walker, and McLaws had been ordered that afternoon by Lee to join him. Jackson's reply was sent next day in the form of an announcement that, "through God's blessing, Harper's Ferry and its garrison were to be surrendered," and that, leaving Hill, whose troops had borne the heaviest part in the engagement, in command, the other troops would march that evening, as soon as they could get their rations.

It should be said that Jackson completely performed the part assigned to him, as did all who had gone with him. Circling Harper's Ferry, he rounded up the troops at Martinsburg, drove them into Harper's Ferry, which he had already invested on the north and east, and then, following them, proceeded to reduce the place with such

* Allan, p. 364.




The Field of the Antietam

success that on the morning of the 15th, after a fierce bombardment, he had the satisfaction of seizing the town—the white flag being hoisted at the moment his infantry was forming for the assault. By this capture he took 12,500 men, 13,000 small arms, 73 pieces of artillery, and some hundreds of wagons. Having accomplished this feat in accordance with Lee's plans, and waiting only to fill his men's haversacks, he set out to join Lee, lying in front of McClellan's army, which, as stated, had stormed and carried the gaps of the South Mountain in front of him the evening before. They marched all night, forded the Potomac and, while McClellan faltered and reconnoitred and waited to get his whole great army through the passes of the South Mountain, they limped on to the field on the morning of the 16th like a weary pack after a killing chase and added 11,000 worn but victorious troops to the 15,000 or 16,000 men whom McClellan's imagination had magnified into a great army. Thirteen thousand men of Lee's army were still at Harper's Ferry, and every hour of delay was precious for him.

The passes of the South Mountain having been carried while Jackson was closing in on Harper's Ferry, twenty miles away, General Lee on the night of the 14th withdrew his army across Antietam Creek and assumed a position which he

thought stronger, along a range of hills on the east side of the Hagerstown Turnpike, with his right resting on Antietam Creek and his left refused across the turnpike some three miles to the northward, this turnpike being a line of communication between the two wings by which he could support either when hard pressed. His position was a strong one for defence. The ridge on which he lay faced the Antietam lying in its deep ravine, and commanded the slopes in front, and all but one of the crossings of the creeks. He had no time for intrenchments, but his men were protected partly by stone walls or fences and partly by outcropping ledges of limestone and belts of forest. The right rested on a spur which lifted above the Antietam, the left on Nicodemus Run, near the Potomac, with a protecting wood just behind. The issue proved that the line had been chosen with a soldier's eye. Thus ensconced, he waited for Jackson, who on the morning of the same day (the 15th) had, as already stated, captured Harper's Ferry, with its garrison, munitions, and stores, and, leaving A. P. Hill in charge, set out in haste at nightfall to reinforce Lee, who was confronting McClellan. Happily for Lee, McClellan was still seeing shadows. He waited to make everything sure.*

* Ropes, II, pp. 354, 355.

McClellan's army, with whom Lee's cavalry had been so effectively skirmishing as to retard the advance all the forenoon, appeared in his front in the early afternoon of the 15th, and Ropes declares that it was an "unique opportunity" that was offered the Union general. McClellan, however, as he had written Halleck on the night of the 13th, still believed that Lee had at least 100,000 men under his command, and he knew how ably that army, whatever its numbers, was commanded. Lee's very boldness was his salvation. Had he shown a less dauntless front McClellan would have destroyed him. As it was, McClellan could not imagine that with less than a sixth of the force which had swept him from the mountain passes, Lee would stand for battle with a river at his back. Moreover, he believed that his own army was still not fully recovered from the demoralization it had suffered from under Pope. The Army of the Potomac, he declared later, "was thoroughly exhausted by the desperate fighting and severe marching in the unhealthy regions of the Chickahominy, and afterward during the second Bull Run campaign." He held that "nothing but sheer necessity justified the advance of the Army of the Potomac to South Mountain and Antietam in its then con-

dition." * His idea was, as he has written, to force Lee back across the Potomac, but not to risk losing a battle which, lost, might lose Washington. He was, therefore, more than ordinarily inclined to be cautious. Accordingly, although his army was now spread out on the slopes above the left bank of the Antietam in full view of Lee, and his artillery engaged in a brief duel with Lee's guns posted above the right bank, it was not until next day (the 16th) that he made any demonstrations against Lee. Meantime Jackson was pushing forward all that night, and on the morning of the 16th he arrived with all of his army who could march, the remainder of them, barefooted and lame, being left behind. But these, alike with those who could march, were flushed with victory.

McClellan now proposed, if possible, to destroy Lee. Lee proposed to receive McClellan's assault, and, if opportunity presented itself, to deal him at the right moment a counterstroke which should destroy him. McClellan had by his report 87,000 men and 275 guns on the field; Lee had less than 36,000 after his last regiment arrived.

Lee's troops were posted, with Longstreet commanding his right and centre and Jackson his left, with Hood in support, his cavalry guarding

* "Battles and Leaders," II, p. 564.

the wings, while McClellan, in disposing his forces, had placed Hooker on his extreme right with the First Corps, Sumner next on his right with two corps, the Second and Twelfth, then Porter with the Fifth Corps occupying his centre, and Burnside on the left with the Ninth Corps, all good troops and bravely led. That afternoon, in pursuance of McClellan's plan, Hooker was ordered to cross the Antietam and assault Lee's left, and crossing the stream his corps assaulted the portion of the line held by Hood, but was "gallantly repulsed." The only effect of this assault is declared by Ropes to have been the disclosure of McClellan's plans.* It at least informed Lee where to look for the attack next day. That night Mansfield, with the Twelfth Corps, followed Hooker across the Antietam and waited for dawn.

The real battle of Sharpsburg was fought on the 17th, and was the bloodiest battle of the war, a battle in which intrepid courage marked both sides, shining alike in the furious charges of the men who assaulted Lee's lines and the undaunted constancy of the men who defended them. It began early in the morning, as expected, with an attack by Hooker's corps, under such gallant commanders

* Ropes, II, pp. 358, 359.

as Meade, Doubleday, and Ricketts; the first shock falling on Ewell's Division in Jackson's wing, and within the deadly hour of the first onslaught, General J. R. Jones, commanding Jackson's old division, was borne from the field, to be followed immediately by Starke, who succeeded him in command, mortally wounded; Colonel Douglass, commanding Lawton's Brigade, was killed; General Lawton, commanding a division, and Colonel Walker, commanding a brigade, were severely wounded. More than half of the brigades of Lawton and Hays were either killed or wounded, and more than a third of Trimble's, and all of the regimental commanders in those brigades, except two, were killed or wounded.* "The corn in a field of thirty acres was cut as close as if cut by the sickle, and the dead lay piled in regular ranks along the whole Confederate front." In this extremity, Hood's Brigades and three of D. H. Hill's Brigades were rushed to the front in support of the exhausted divisions of Jones and Lawton, and after an hour of furious fighting, Hooker's force, led by himself with Doubleday, Ricketts, and Meade, gallant commanders of gallant divisions, were beaten off, with Hooker himself wounded and over 2,500 men dead or wounded.

* *Ibid.*, II, p. 359, citing Jackson's report, 27, W. R., p. 956.

It was a terrific opening of a terrific day. As they retired, Mansfield's corps, 8,500 muskets, came in on their left, and in the furious onslaught on the already shattered brigades of D. H. Hill and Hood, bore them back across the turnpike, "with loss of some 1,700 men out of the 7,000 brought into action," and an even heavier loss on the Confederate side. But beyond the turnpike the remnants of Jones's Division under Grigsby, reinforced by Early, who had succeeded the wounded Lawton in command of Ewell's Division, "clung obstinately" to their ground,* and Stuart's Artillery shattered the charging lines. Lee knew the work before him and recognized the need of holding back at all hazards these assaulting columns. From his post on an eminence near his centre his eagle eye had seen the crux of the fight, and while McClellan's columns were spread beyond the Antietam opposite his right and centre, he despatched McLaws and Walker from his right to aid their old comrades. So far Lee's left had suffered terribly, and only the supreme courage of the men —rank and file—had saved Lee's army.

Along the left so thin was the line that Stuart, always resourceful, had employed the expedient of posting standards at intervals behind the ridge,

* Ropes, II, pp. 361, 362.

so that they could be seen above the crest, and gathering up the stragglers, he formed them into a body of sharp-shooters, and, taking personal command himself, led them forward, transforming them from a lot of shirkers into a band of heroes.* It was at this point that Lee was approached by a captain of artillery, who, having had three of his four guns disabled, asked for instructions, and having told him to take his other gun in, found that his own son was one of the gunners.

A brief lull now took place, which was broken by the advance of Sumner, with two divisions, 18,000 men, pushing hotly across the turnpike in three lines against the Confederate left, his veteran troops cheering and being cheered, confident of sweeping everything before them. It was a perilous moment, for Hill and Hood and Early had been terribly shattered, however "obstinately they clung to their ground," and Sedgwick's and Richardson's troops were fresh and game. Beyond the turnpike, however, they came on the remnants of Jackson's Divisions, lying behind a rocky ledge, who gave them a staggering reception. And at this moment the divisions of McLaws and Walker, who had been sent by Lee from his right,

* "Story of a Cannoneer Under Stonewall Jackson," p. 151.

came up, and, under Jackson's orders, who rode himself to meet McLaws and direct him to attack and turn the enemy's flank, they deployed across Sumner's and Sedgwick's flank and poured forth on them a fire so "terrible and sustained" that, after a futile effort to change front, the Federals broke and fell back in confusion under the shelter of their artillery, with a loss of over 2,200, officers and men, all within a few minutes.* It was the crucial point of the battle. Had Sumner been able to sweep over Jackson's exhausted divisions, Lee's army would have been destroyed. They had already given back under the terrific onslaught of superior numbers and arms, and a gap had been made in Jackson's line when the reinforcements arrived. "God has been very kind to us this day," said Stonewall Jackson, as he rode with McLaws on the heels of his victorious soldiery, who were sweeping Sedgwick from the ridge they had gained at such cost.

This act of Lee in reinforcing his left wing from his right at this critical juncture, Ropes praises as exhibiting remarkable "skill and resolution." An effort made to press Sedgwick's defeated troops, who reformed behind their artillery, was

* Henderson, II, p. 252, citing Palfrey, "The Antietam and Fredericksburg," p. 87.

repulsed by the artillery and Smith's brigade, which had just come up and saved Sedgwick; but not until thirty-nine and one-half per cent of McLaws's Division had fallen. A little later the remnants of Jones's and Lawton's troops drove the enemy from the ground they had secured in the second assault. But by this time all the Confederate troops in that part of the field had sustained terrific losses. Says Henderson, from whom and Ropes much of this account is taken: "30,500 infantry at the lowest calculation, and probably 100 guns, besides those across the Antietam—eight divisions of infantry, more than half of McClellan's army—lay paralyzed before them for the rest of the day." * Nearly 13,000 men, including no less than fifteen generals and brigadiers, had fallen within six hours. "They had, indeed," says Ropes, "with the utmost bravery, with inflexible resolution, and at a terrible sacrifice of life, repelled the third attack on the left flank of the Confederate army." † Meantime, Sumner's other division, under French, which was put in to reinforce Sedgwick, had by bearing southward been engaged in a bloody and desperate conflict, on Lee's left centre, with the divisions of D. H. Hill

* "Life of Stonewall Jackson," pp. 254, 255.
† Ropes, II, p. 367.

and R. H. Anderson, the latter of whom, on his way to reinforce the left wing, finding Hill's already decimated brigades hard pressed, had turned aside to their succor. They were now in a desperate struggle with these 10,000 fresh troops, under French and Richardson, who tried again and again to secure the strong central point marked by the Dunkard Church. The combat which followed "was," says Ropes, "beyond a question one of the most sanguinary and desperate in the whole war." * The Confederate artillery was hammered almost out of existence; the wood next the Dunkard Church was carried, and still Longstreet's Infantry held their ground, recapturing the wood. For three hours, from ten till one, the conflict raged over the famous sunken road before the Federals secured possession of it, and "Bloody Lane" is the name to-day by which is known this roadway whose possession that day cost over 6,000 men. "At this moment," says the same high authority whose account we have been following, "fortune favored McClellan. The two divisions of Franklin's corps, under W. F. Smith and Slocum, had arrived on this part of the field." They numbered from 10,000 to 12,000 men, fresh and in good condition.

* *Ibid.*, II, p. 368.

Franklin wished to put them in, but Sumner, who had tested the temper of the men who held Lee's line, was unwilling to risk another attack, and "McClellan, undoubtedly much influenced by Sumner, would not permit any attack." "Even Sumner, bravest of men," says Henderson, "had been staggered by the fierce assault which had driven Sedgwick's troops like sheep across the corn-field, nor was McClellan disposed to push matters to extremity." *

The battle was now raging along the front of Lee's right, protected by the Antietam. About 1 P. M. the bridge was carried by Burnside's troops, and the stream was crossed both above and below, but not until four assaults had been repelled by Toombs's Brigade, of D. R. Jones's Division, assisted by the well-posted artillery. About three o'clock Cox made his assault on the heights where lay Lee's right, and achieved "a brilliant success," seizing the spur, breaking the infantry line, and capturing McIntosh's battery; and, says Ropes, "a complete victory seemed within sight. But this was not to be." Just at the crucial moment the Confederate "light division"—five brigades under A. P. Hill—pushing from Harper's Ferry for the sound of the guns, having marched

* "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II, pp. 255, 256.

seventeen miles and forded the Potomac, "climbed the heights south of the town," and "without an instant's hesitation they rushed to the rescue of their comrades," and the end was not long in coming. The lines were recaptured along with McIntosh's battery, and the Federal troops, with victory apparently almost in their grasp, were driven back with terrific slaughter. When night fell, 28,000 men lay on the field, the proof of the constancy of the American soldier. When night fell, Lee's army, decimated but intact, still held its position above the Antietam. "The failure to put Franklin in" was, in the opinion of Ropes, a capital error. He insists that McClellan should have won the battle; for unlike those who argue only from subsequent events, this thoughtful student of war admits that while "Lee's invasion had terminated in failure," he and his army had unquestionably won glory, even though he claims that the prestige of victory rested later with McClellan.* Thus ended what is said to have been the bloodiest day of the war, and one of the bloodiest battles ever fought. Each side lost about one-quarter of the troops engaged, and Lee had with less than half the force of his enemy, though compelled to fight in a place where he had not intended

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 379.

to fight, beaten his brave enemy off with such slaughter that though he offered him battle next day he was not again attacked, and the following morning he retired across the Potomac unmolested. Of "his intrepidity" in standing to fight an army, which Ropes places at 70,000, with less than 40,000 men, not all of whom in fact were with him at the commencement of the action, Ropes has nothing but praise. "Nor could any troops," he adds, "have more fully justified the reliance their leader placed in them than the troops of the Army of Northern Virginia." * "Lee, in fact, intended to try his men again." Both Longstreet and Jackson urged recrossing the Potomac that night, but he refused.

"As the men," says Henderson, "sank down to rest on the line of battle, so exhausted that they could not be awakened to eat their rations; as the blood cooled and the tension on the nerves relaxed, and even the officers, faint with hunger and sickened with the awful slaughter, looked forward with apprehension to the morrow, from one indomitable heart the hope of victory had not yet vanished. In the deep silence of the night, more oppressive than the stunning roar of battle, Lee, still mounted, stood on the high-road to the

* *Ibid.*, II, p. 377.

Potomac, and as general after general rode in wearily from the front, he asked quietly of each, 'How is it on your part of the line?' Each told the same tale: their men were worn out; the enemy's numbers were overwhelming; there was nothing left but to retreat across the Potomac before daylight. Even Jackson had no other counsel to offer. His report was not the less inpressive for his quiet and respectful tone. He had had to contend, he said, against the heaviest odds he had ever met. Many of his divisional and brigade commanders were dead or wounded, and his loss had been severe. Hood, who came next, was quite unmanned. He exclaimed that he had no men left. 'Great God!' cried Lee, with an excitement he had not yet displayed, 'where is the splendid division you had this morning?' 'They are lying on the field, where you sent them,' was the reply, 'for few have straggled. My division has been almost wiped out.'

"After all had given their opinion, there was an appalling silence, which seemed to last for several minutes, and then General Lee, rising erect in his stirrups, said: 'Gentlemen, we will not cross the Potomac to-night. You will go to your respective commands, strengthen your lines; send two officers from each brigade toward the ford to

collect your stragglers and get them up. Many have come in. I have had the proper steps taken to collect all the men who are in the rear. If McClellan wants to fight in the morning, I will give him battle again. Go!' Without a word of remonstrance the group broke up, leaving their great commander alone with his responsibility, and, says an eye-witness, 'if I read their faces aright, there was not one but considered that General Lee was taking a fearful risk.'"* All the next day he watched for this chance as the eagle watches from his crag for the prey; but it did not come and he recrossed into Virginia. He even looked forward to assuming the offensive. McClellan's left wing, protected by the Antietam and strongly posted beyond, was impregnable with any force he could bring to bear, but his right was not so well protected, and Lee now planned to attack and turn McClellan's right, and Jackson was to make the attempt to crush this wing, for which purpose he was to be given fifty guns, drawn from his own and other commands. As Stuart, however, had reported against the attempt the evening before, so now Jackson, having personally inspected the position in company with

* Henderson, II, pp. 262, 263, quoting General Stephen D. Lee, who was present at the conference.

Colonel Stephen D. Lee, reported that it was impossible with any force he could bring to the attack.*

Of the battle of Sharpsburg, or Antietam, the view usually expressed is one largely influenced by events which succeeded it after a long interval. The view at the time, based on the actual battle and its immediate consequences, was widely different. The North was full of dejection rather than of elation, and General G. H. Gordon, who now commanded a division, wrote: "It would be useless to deny that at this period there was a despondent feeling in the army." General McClellan wrote that the States of the North are flooded with deserters and absentees. † Horace Greeley's paper, representing the great constituency which at that time opposed Lincoln's methods, voiced their opinion. "He leaves us," he declared, speaking of Lee, "the débris of his late camp, two disabled pieces of artillery, a few hundred of his stragglers, perhaps 2,000 of his wounded, and as many more of his unburied dead. Not a sound field-piece, caisson, ambulance, or wagon; not a tent, box of stores, or a pound of ammunition. He takes with him the supplies

* *Ibid.*, II, p. 266, citing General S. D. Lee's account.
† Off. Rep., vol. XIX, part I, p. 70.

gathered in Maryland and the rich spoils of Harper's Ferry." *

What those rich spoils were Lee himself mentions in the general order issued to his army, two weeks after it had, on the field of Sharpsburg, as he declares, with less than one-third of the enemy's numbers, resisted from daylight until dark the whole army of the enemy, and repulsed every attack along his entire front of more than four miles in extent.

In this order the commanding general recounts to his army its achievements, in reviewing which he declares he "cannot withhold the expression of his admiration of the indomitable courage it has displayed in battle, and its cheerful endurance of privation and hardship on the march." †

If an exultant note of pardonable pride in his army creeps into it, who can wonder! "Since your great victories around Richmond," he declares, "you have defeated the enemy at Cedar Mountain, expelled him from the Rappahannock, and, after a conflict of three days, utterly repulsed him on the plain of Manassas, and forced him to take shelter within the fortifications around his capital. Without halting for repose, you crossed

* *New York Tribune.* Quoted from Jones's "Lee," p. 195.
† General Orders, No. 116.

the Potomac, stormed the heights of Harper's Ferry, made prisoners of more than 11,600 men and captured upward of 70 pieces of artillery, all of their small arms, and other munitions of war. While one corps of the army was thus engaged, another insured its success by arresting at Boonsboro the combined armies of the enemy, advancing under their favorite general to the relief of their beleaguered comrades.

"On the field of Sharpsburg, with less than one-third of his numbers, you resisted from daylight till dark the whole army of the enemy, and repulsed every attack along his entire front of more than four miles in extent.

"The whole of the following day you stood prepared to resume the conflict on the same ground, and retired next morning without molestation across the Potomac.

"Two attempts subsequently made by the enemy to follow you across the river have resulted in his complete discomfiture and his being driven back with loss."

Such was the view that the commanding general, Lee himself, took of his campaign two weeks after the battle of Antietam, and it is no wonder that he should have added: "Achievements such as these demanded much valor and

patriotism. History records few examples of greater fortitude and endurance than this army has exhibited;" or that he should, as he reports, have "been commissioned by the President to thank the army in the name of the Confederate States for the undying fame they had won for their arms."

In truth, whatever long subsequent events may have developed as to the consequences of the attack at Sharpsburg and Lee's retirement across the Potomac afterward, to the student of war, now as then, it must appear that the honors of that bloodiest battle of the war were with Lee, and remain with him to-day. That McClellan, with the complete disposition of Lee's forces in his hand, with an army of 87,000 men as brave as ever died for glory, and as gallantly officered, should not have dsetroyed Lee with but 35,000 in the total on the field, and that Lee, with but that number up, while the rest, shoeless and lame, were limping far behind, yet trying to get up, should, with his back to the river, have not only survived that furious day, repulsing every attack along that deadly four-mile front, but should have stood his ground to offer battle again next day, and then have retired across the river unmolested, is proof beyond all doubt.*

* The Union losses were 12,400; Confederate, 8,000.

"Why do you not move that line of battle to make it conform to your own?" asked Hunter McGuire of Grigsby, gazing at a long line of men lying quietly in ranks in a field at some little distance.

"Those men are all dead," was the reply; "they are Georgia soldiers." *

A Federal patrol that night, crossing a field where the fight had raged fiercest, came on a battle-line asleep, rank on rank, skirmishers in front and battle-line behind, all asleep on their arms. They were all dead.

It has been thought well to discuss somewhat at length this great battle fought by Lee on Northern soil, because it seems to illustrate peculiarly those qualities which, in combination, made him the great captain he was, and absolutely refutes the foolish charge that he was only a defensive general and remarkable only when behind breastworks. At Antietam there were no breastworks save the limestone ledges, the fences, and the sunken roads cut by the rains and worn by the wagons. It exhibits absolutely his grasp of the most difficult and unexpected situation, his unequalled audacity, his intrepidity, his resourcefulness, his

* Address on Stonewall Jackson, by Dr. Hunter McGuire, "The Confederate Cause," p. 204.

incomparable resolution, and his skill in handling men alike in detached sections and in mass on the field of battle. Possibly, no other general on either side would have had the boldness to risk the stand Lee made in the angle of the Antietam, with the Potomac at his back; certainly no other general save Grant would have stood his ground after the battle, and have saved the morale of his army, and as to Grant, it is merely conjecture; for he fought no battle south of the Rapidan in which he did not largely outnumber his antagonist and vastly excel him in equipment.

It is true, as Ropes states, that McClellan followed Lee across the Potomac, but his two immediate attempts were promptly repelled. When McClellan found that Lee had recrossed the Potomac, he conceived a different idea of the situation from that he had had with Lee lying in his front with refilled cartridge boxes and ammunition chests. He decided to advance, and proceeded on the afternoon of the 19th to cross the river in pursuit. This movement he intrusted to Porter. Lee was now withdrawing to a region where he could rest and subsist his troops, and the ford at which the army had crossed was guarded by only a small rear guard of some 600 infantry, supported by the reserve artillery under General

W. N. Pendleton. Crossing over under cover of a heavy artillery fire, Porter attacked the rear guard, which, owing to the necessity to guard threatened points above and below the ford, had been reduced to about 200 men, and captured four guns. McClellan then ordered Porter to move across in force, confident that he would catch Lee in retreat and disable him. Porter acted with decision. Lee appears to have gauged well the strength of the pursuit. When he received notice of the affair of the 19th from General Pendleton, he ordered Jackson to "drive back those people," and Jackson, who had already been apprised of the situation, acted promptly. With Hill leading, and Early in support, he turned on the force that was advancing under Sykes and Morell, and with an impetuous charge drove it back across the river, dyeing the stream with the blood of many a brave man, and entailing upon Porter's gallant corps a loss which satisfied the commander that though the Army of Virginia had retired from the banks of the Antietam, the idea that it was in retreat had not found a lodgement on the south bank of the Potomac. This was the end of McClellan's serious attempt to follow up the "victory" of Antietam. It was not until more than a month later, when Lee lay

about Winchester, that McClellan made good a footing in Virginia. During this time, McClellan not having crossed the Potomac, Lee sent Stuart across the river on one of his famous around-the-enemy rides. Crossing the Potomac at daylight on the 10th of October, Stuart with 1,800 men rode due north to Mercersburg, thence on to Chambersburg, forty-six miles from his starting-point, in Virginia, which he reached at seven o'clock that evening. Here he destroyed the depot of supplies, including a large quantity of small arms and ammunition, and making a requisition for some 500 horses, he set out around the rear of McClellan's army. Crossing the mountains, he passed through Summitsburg, crossed the Monocacy near Frederick, and reached Hyattstown at daylight on the 12th. Learning that 4,000 or 5,000 troops were guarding the roads, he took a by-road, and passing within a mile or two of the enemy near Pottersville, he seized the ford known as White's Ford, and, after a sharp skirmish, crossed back into Virginia, having ridden one hundred and twenty-six miles from daylight on the 10th to noon on the 12th, and passed close by McClellan's army lying in wait to catch him, and all without the loss of a single man killed.

This brilliant action of Stuart's had a far-reach-

ing effect. It was the second time the daring cavalry leader had ridden around McClellan, and the people of the North were so excited by it that McClellan was forced to move southward. In the end, indeed, it brought about his removal.

"Though badly found in weapons, ammunition, military equipment, etc.," says Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley, in speaking of Lee at this time, "his army had, nevertheless, achieved great things. His men were so badly shod (indeed, a considerable portion had no boots or shoes) that, at the battle of Antietam, General Lee assured me he never had more than 35,000 men with him; the remainder of his army, shoeless and footsore, were straggling along the roads in the rear, trying to reach him in time for the battle." Henderson declares that the discovery of Lee's despatch was the cause of the failure of his invasion of Maryland. But for this he might have selected his own battle-field, there need have been no forced marches, and the 25,000 stragglers who had been left beyond the Potomac would have been in the fighting line.

Had Lee been in McClellan's place, who can doubt what the issue would have been? In fact, Mr. Lincoln plainly put this question to McClellan in another connection, and a little later re-

lieved him of command and put the brave but hesitating Burnside in his place, only to add, a few weeks later on the fatal field of Fredericksburg, new laurels to Lee's chaplet.

# X

## FREDERICKSBURG

TOWARD the end of October, McClellan began to cross the Potomac with a view to moving through the Piedmont and thus forcing Lee from the Shenandoah Valley. He had learned a lesson in strategy from his able opponent. He brought into the Piedmont about 125,000 men and 320 guns, while Lee had in all about 72,000 men and 275 guns, of which 127 were smooth-bore, short-range pieces. Lee still pursued his old plan of threatening the enemy's communications. He left Jackson with the Second Corps about Winchester, while Longstreet with the First Corps was to bar McClellan's way to the southward and fall on his communications should he turn to the Valley. He had no fear of McClellan's marching on Richmond before him, and he chose the plan which with his smaller force was the only one that promised assured success. He had at first decided to bring Jackson south of the Blue Ridge to unite with Longstreet by means of Fisher's Gap, and from the region about Gordonsville threaten

McClellan's communications; but he immediately afterward changed his plan (at Jackson's suggestion, Henderson thinks) and left Jackson in "the Valley" to operate in the way he knew so well, while he himself remained in McClellan's front, awaiting his opportunity. His letter of November 9 to Jackson, setting forth his plan, casts a light on his character, and on his relation to his great lieutenant. It runs as follows: *

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
*November* 9, 1862—1 P. M.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL THOMAS J. JACKSON,
*Commanding Left Wing, etc.*

*General:* Your letter of the 7th is at hand. The enemy seems to be massing his troops along the Manassas Railroad in the vicinity of Piedmont, which gives him great facilities for bringing up supplies from Alexandria. It has occurred to me that his object may be to seize upon Strasburg with his main force, to intercept your ascent of the valley. This would oblige you to cross into the Lost River Valley, or west of it, unless you could force a passage through the Blue Ridge; hence my anxiety for your safety. If you can prevent such a movement of the enemy, and operate strongly upon his flank and rear through the gaps of the Blue Ridge, you would certainly, in

* War Records, series I, vol. XIX, part II, p. 705.

my opinion, effect the object you propose. A demonstration of crossing into Maryland would serve the same purpose, and might call him back to the Potomac. As my object is to retard and baffle his designs, if it can be accomplished by manœuvring your corps as you propose, it will serve my purpose as well as if effected in any other way. With this understanding, you can use your discretion, which I know I can rely upon, in remaining or advancing up the valley. But I desire you will take precautions to prevent the enemy's occupying the roads west of the Massanutten Mountains, and your demonstration upon his flank might probably be as well made from a position nearer to Strasburg as from that you now occupy. If the enemy should move into the valley through Thornton's Gap, you must seize the pass through the Massanutten Mountains as soon as you can, while Longstreet will advance through Milman's, which you term Fisher's Gap (on the direct road from Madison Court House to New Market). But I think his movement upon Front Royal the more probable of the two.

Keep me advised of your movements and intentions; and you must keep always in view the probability of an attack upon Richmond, from either north or south, when a concentration of forces will become necessary. The enemy has made no advance south of the Rappahannock line since I last wrote you. . . .

The non-occupation of Martinsburg by the enemy, and his not marching into the valley from

his former base on the Potomac, shows, I think, that his whole force has been drawn from Maryland into Virginia east of the Blue Ridge. His retirement from Snicker's and Ashby's Gaps, and concentration of his force on the railroad in the vicinity of Manassas Gap, must either be for the purpose of supplying it or for making a descent upon Front Royal and Strasburg. I hope, therefore, you will be on your guard.

I am, etc.,

R. E. LEE, *General.*

Meantime, McClellan's methods were rapidly alienating anew the confidence of both the government and the people of the United States. McClellan felt that he had saved Washington and the nation; the government felt that he should have destroyed Lee's army. The government complained of McClellan's want of celerity; McClellan complained of Halleck's fault-finding. He wrote urging the government so say something in commendation of his army, which had been "badly cut up and scattered by the overwhelming numbers brought against them in the battle of the 17th." The reply was a complaint of the army's "inactivity."

Finally, the breach became so wide as to place its closing beyond possibility. When Lee retired across the Potomac, Mr. Lincoln, as a war

measure, gave notice of his intention to issue an emancipation proclamation. This, though it eventually had an immense influence on the result of the struggle, was at the time contrary to the views of many, both out of the armies of the Union and in them, and was sharply, if indirectly, criticised by McClellan.*

In the early days of November, McClellan advanced on Warrenton, and Lee, in anticipation of this, moved down to the east of the Rlue Ridge and occupied Culpeper and the region south of the Rappahannock, whereupon, after a tart correspondence between McClellan and the authorities in Washington over McClellan's failure to destroy Lee's army, McClellan was relieved of his command, the order issuing on the 5th of November. At the same time—indeed, by the same order—the gallant Fitz John Porter was ordered before a court-martial to answer charges preferred against him by Pope, that he had lost him the battle of Second Manassas. Thus was lost the service of "probably the best officer in the Army of the Potomac," † and thus the North lost the services of the general whom General Lee is said to have considered the best commander op-

* Rhodes's "Hist. of U. S.," IV, p. 191. Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," p. 289.

† *Ibid.*, II, p. 300.

posed to him during the war. That McClellan was not Lee's equal, either as a strategist, a tactician, or a fighter, was clearly manifest then as it is now; but he was a great organizer, conducted war on high principles, restored the morale of a shattered army, and defeated the object of Lee's first invasion of Maryland. And, as has been already quoted, it was well said that "without McClellan there could have been no Grant."

Two days before Lee's letter to Jackson was despatched, and on the very day that Lee decided to concentrate his forces, the plan of the campaign from the North was unexpectedly revolutionized. That day Burnside rode into McClellan's camp with an order superseding McClellan and appointing himself in command of the army. Politics had joined hands with impatience, and the most experienced general of the North was set aside for one who had so far commanded only a corps and doubted his own ability to do more.* What McClellan might have achieved had he been left untrammelled, as Grant was later, will never be known, any more than it will be known what Joseph E. Johnston might have accomplished had he not been superseded by the gallant but rash

* Ropes, II, pp. 441, 442. Rhodes's "Hist. of U. S.," IV, pp. 190, 191. Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, pp. 299, 300.

Hood before Sherman. But he could hardly have done worse than Burnside did. For the latter completely failed, and his failure led to a sacrifice of life as terrible as it was useless.

The new commander absolutely changed the plan which McClellan had laid down. Turning southward, he led his army straight for Richmond. It sounded well, but was more difficult of accomplishment. Leaving Warrenton on the 15th of November, in two days Burnside's advance guard was on the heights opposite Fredericksburg. Had he pushed forward he might have seized the town and the heights behind it, and this Sumner urged his doing; but he feared to divide his army, and two days later Lee, who had previously advised, though he had not ordered, Jackson's withdrawal toward Richmond, ordered Longstreet to take position there, and call Jackson from the valley to Orange Court House on the way to join him. "One hardly knows," says Ropes, "which is more remarkable, General Lee's sagacity in estimating the inertia of his antagonist or his temerity in confronting him so long with a force only one-third as strong, and actually for a time refusing the aid which Jackson was bringing to him." *

* Ropes, II, p. 454.

Burnside, having made it thus manifest that he designed to cross the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg, Lee now moved down from Culpeper and Orange, on the upper waters of the Rappahannock, and posting himself on the heights on the southern side of the town, fortified and awaited Burnside's further advance. The fortifications for the artillery were made under the superintendence of General Lee's chief of artillery, General William N. Pendleton, and were much commended; at least they served. The question that had presented itself on Burnside's advance was whether Lee should take position at Fredericksburg or on the south shore of the North Anna. It appears that Lee and his lieutenants preferred the latter line of defence as presenting a better chance for a counterstroke; but the Confederate authorities insisted on the former. And Lee, always dutiful, proceeded to secure this line. To allow the enemy to approach so near Richmond unopposed, appeared to the government bad policy, and the valley of the Rappahannock and the other regions which would be given up were too valuable to be sacrificed without a struggle. Leaving Winchester on the 22d, Jackson marched down the valley, and crossing the Blue Ridge at Fisher's Gap, reached Orange Court House on the 27th,

thirty-six miles from Fredericksburg, having marched meantime one hundred and twenty miles and rested his army two days. Burnside was still on the north side of the Rappahannock, getting his new line of communications and base of supplies established; the roads were growing worse and worse and the North more and more impatient.

Thus Lee in mid-December found himself posted on the heights of Fredericksburg to bar Burnside's way.

Fredericksburg lies on the plain on the west bank of the Rappahannock, where it is perhaps one hundred and fifty yards wide. The heights on this side begin on the river above the town and, curving around to the southward, continue in a range of hills parallel to the river at a distance of about a mile from the stream. The heights on the northern bank rose immediately above the water and were crowned by Burnside's powerful batteries. Burnside's forces, as given by himself, numbered 113,000, while Lee's total strength was 78,288 men of all arms.* Longstreet was posted on the heights back of the old town in a formidable position, and Jackson was (on the 29th of November) despatched by Lee to guard the crossing-places further down the river. Early,

* Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 145, 146.

in command of Ewell's Division, was sent to Skinker's Neck, a point ten or twelve miles below the town. D. H. Hill was placed at Port Royal, five miles yet farther down. A. P. Hill and Taliaferro were posted at or near Guinea Station, on the railway to Richmond—the former within a few miles of Longstreet's right and the latter some five miles farther off, all about an equal distance from Longstreet and D. H. Hill. With his troops thus disposed in a way to lead Burnside to attack and at the same time to enable him to concentrate at the moment of attack and defeat him, Lee awaited his enemy's next move, while his cavalry division guarded his flank and patrolled the stream. He had not long to watch, and this time was put to good use in fortifying. An attempt to pass the Federal gunboats up the river was defeated at Port Royal by D. H. Hill and Stuart's horse artillery, and Early caused to end what was apparently an attempt to cross at Skinker's Neck. But on the 11th Burnside moved directly on Fredericksburg.

The actual laying of the pontoons, after a number of attempts in which the troops attempting it were picked off, man by man, by Barksdale's Mississippi regiments posted in the cellars of houses overlooking the water, was gallantly ef-

fected by the Federal troops on the afternoon of the 11th, under cover of a heavy artillery fire from 150 guns, and that evening and the following day Burnside's army crossed over on five bridges, their movements being veiled by a heavy fog which rose from the river and the sodden ground, blanketing all beneath it. The following morning as the fog lifted, Burnside's army, with Franklin commanding his left and Sumner his right, filled the plains as they advanced to the attack where Lee lay along the heights above the town, with Longstreet commanding his left and Jackson his right. It was a battle as fierce almost as Sharpsburg, and scarcely less deadly for the hapless assailants. Also, like Sharpsburg, it was fatuously fought in detachments. The assault began on the less commanding hills to the south of the town where Jackson lay, his right protected by the artillery and Stuart's Cavalry, faced north on the plain near Hamilton's Crossing. Here young John Pelham reaped fame by holding back the enemy for a time with a single piece, posted on the plain. Burnside had imagined that Jackson was still at Port Royal, fifteen miles below, guarding the crossing,* and thus had ordered Franklin to seize the heights. Franklin promptly directed

* Ropes, II, p. 468.

Reynolds to prepare to attack. He in compliance with his instructions "assigned the duty to Meade's division, supported by Gibbon's." In three battle-lines came on, as if on parade, Meade's and Gibbon's earnest Pennsylvanians. Line after line advanced to the attack, only to be swept back with terrific slaughter. When the infantry were swept back, the artillery was sent in to clear the way, and after a fierce duel the Pennsylvanians advanced again. At one point where a marshy stream bordered by woodland, known as Deep Run, came through, it had been supposed that the marsh was impassable, and thus a gap of about 600 yards had been left in Jackson's lines, though Early lay across it only a third of a mile to the rear. Here, shielded by the woods from the leaden sleet as they advanced, the gallant assailants broke through the first line of A. P. Hill. Passing between the brigades of Lane and Archer, the first brigade turned to the right and rolled up Lane's right flank, while the next one, sweeping to the left, struck Archer's flank, who, though taken by surprise, held on stoutly. Had they been supported the situation might have been serious, but Thomas came to Lane's aid, and Jackson ordered up Early and Taliaferro from his third line, while Gregg brought up his brigade in time

to help stay the disaster, though it cost him his life to do so.

The leading regiment in the advance of Gibbon's troops was the 107th Pennsylvania, led by its gallant commander, Colonel (later General) T. F. McCoy, a veteran of the Mexican War. In the advance it was separated for a time from the rest of the line, and the leading place was taken by other troops, which were staggered and stopped by the terrific fire directed against them. Finding his advance checked, General Gibbon rode up to the 107th Pennsylvania, and pointing to the front, said: "I desire this regiment to take that wood at the point of the bayonet." Colonel McCoy gave the orders to unsling knapsacks and fix bayonets, and, after a few simple words to his men, moved forward. Passing over the broken troops in their front, they rushed onward and penetrated the wood, breaking through the line before them and clearing the line of the railroad.

This was but one of many gallant actions that day, so fatal to the Union arms; but it marked the furthest advance of Burnside's troops on Lee's right.

Franklin's brave divisions having failed to break Lee's right, an assault was made against Lee's left by Sumner, who had been ordered to hold his men where they were sheltered by the town, until

"an impression" could be made on Lee's right. It was an even more impossible and deadly task than Franklin had essayed. A canal too deep to cross save by bridges stretched across the flat below the hill. A stout stone wall ran along the base of the hill known as Marye's Heights, and up the slope rifle pits had been dug to shelter all the men needed for the defence, while on top were posted the artillery and supporting infantry, all sweeping the level plain below with an iron hail. "Six distinct and separate assaults were made against Longstreet's front," line after line rushing recklessly forward under the deadly fire "only to be torn to pieces" and melt away without making any impression on Lee's determined veterans. Franklin was now called on to renew his attack and co-operate on the left. He was unable to respond. His power was spent. His force had been exhausted. When night came the great army of Burnside had been hurled back with losses amounting to 12,500 men, "sacrificed to incompetency," after having displayed, in a task which "exceeded human endeavor," a heroism which "won the praise and the pity of their opponents." *

* Taylor's "General Lee," p. 148. Allan, pp. 475–509. Ropes, II, pp. 462–7. Alexander, pp. 310–316. The losses in the Federal army numbered 12,653; in the Confederate army, 5,322, killed and wounded.

The following day passed without the renewal of the attack which Lee expected, and which Burnside proposed, only to have his lieutenants, who knew the futility of it, protest against such useless sacrifice of life; and next morning Burnside, shaken and distressed over his disaster, sent a flag of truce to Jackson's front, asking for a cessation of hostilities to bury the dead.* As he finished burying his dead he, under cover of a winter storm, retired to the other side in the gloom of defeat and broke his pontoon bridges. It was without doubt one of the most ineffective battles ever fought by the North. A little later Burnside charged a number of his best generals with having failed him and thus caused his defeat. He issued an order dismissing from the service Generals Hooker, Brooks, Newton, and Cochrane, and relieving from duty with the Army of the

* The writer as a small boy rode over the battle-field of Fredericksburg with his father, who was a major on the staff of General William N. Pendleton, General Lee's chief of artillery, and he recalls vividly the terrible sight of a battle-field while the dead are being buried: blood everywhere—along the trenches, the shattered fences, and the roadsides—the orchards, peeled by the bullets and canister, looked at a little distance as if covered with snow; the plank fences, splintered by shot and shrapnel, looked as though they had been whitewashed, and the field, torn by shells and covered with dead horses, broken arms, and débris, presented an ineffaceable scene of desolation, while on the common, being filled with the bloody and rigid forms of those who two days before had been the bravest of the brave, was a long, wide, ghastly trench, where the path of glory ended.

Potomac, Generals Franklin, W. F. Smith, Sturgis, Ferrero, and other officers.* The final answer to this wholesale dismissal came after his "mud-campaign" affair of five or six weeks later, when he attempted to do what Hooker later attempted to do, with disastrous results, at Chancellorsville. He "stuck in the mud," and, on "the representations made by his lieutenants to the President, was superseded" by "Fighting" Joe Hooker.

Fredericksburg was, with the exception of Cold Harbor, almost the only wholly defensive battle that Lee fought, and in this he could scarcely believe that Burnside had put forth all his strength. His report and letters show that he expected and awaited another and fiercer assault. It is asserted that Jackson counselled a night attack on Burnside's army as it lay in the town after the battle, and he undoubtedly contemplated the possibility of such an attack, for he ordered his chief of medical staff to be ready with his bandages to furnish bands for the arms of the men, by which they would know each other should such an attack be made.† Lee, however, decided against this plan, if it was ever formally proposed, and in his report he gives his reason. "The attack

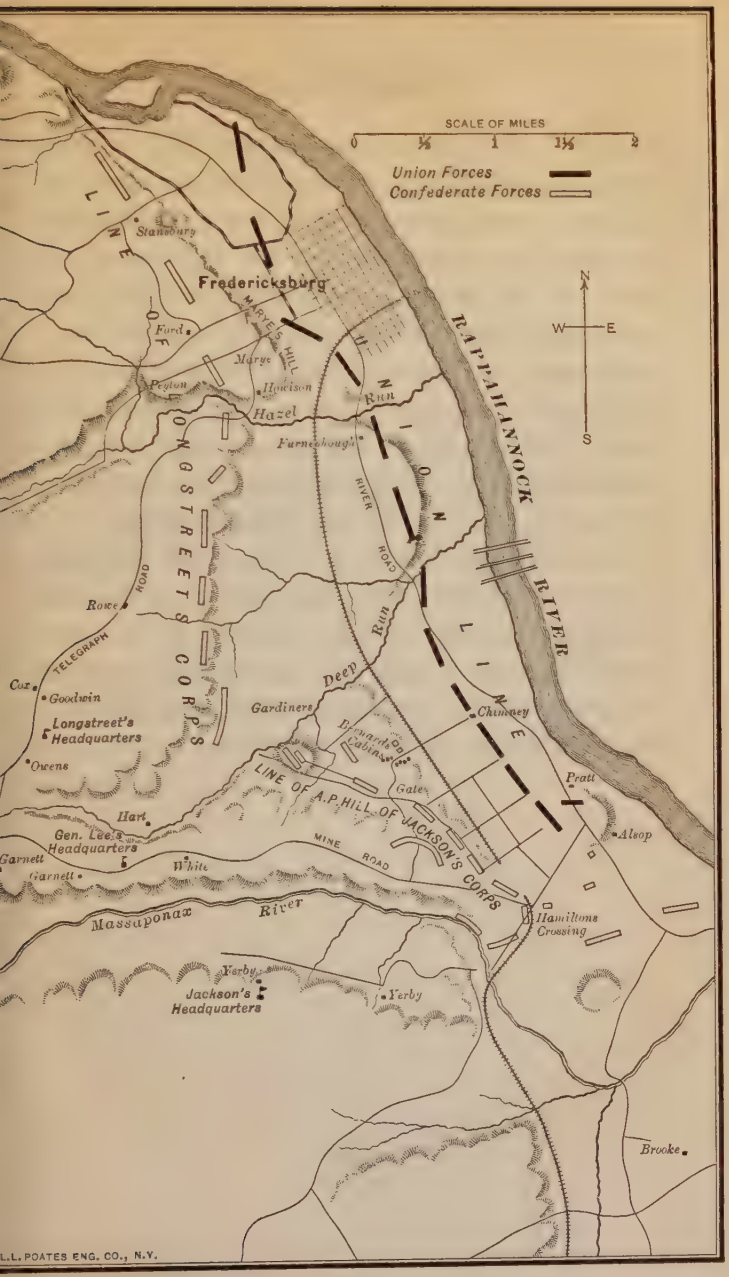
* Off. Rep., 31, p. 998. Ropes, II, p. 470.

† Address on Stonewall Jackson by Dr. Hunter McGuire, "The Confederate Cause." (The Bell Co., Richmond, Va.)

on the 13th," he says, "had been so easily repulsed, and by so small a part of our army, that it was not supposed the enemy would limit his effort, which, in view of the magnitude of his preparations and the extent of his force, seemed to be comparatively insignificant. Believing, therefore, that he would attack us, it was not deemed expedient to lose the advantage of our position and expose the troops to the fire of his inaccessible batteries beyond the river by advancing against him." It appears to be the general opinion of military critics that the mistake of Fredericksburg by the Southern leaders was the substitution of the line of the Rappahannock for that of the North Anna, which Lee and Jackson both favored. Even after his terrific defeat Burnside could not be pursued; his flanks were so well protected by the river and by the tremendous fortifications along the Stafford Heights, on the north bank of the stream. Had he attempted to cross the North Anna and met with a similar defeat, he would probably never have been able to get his army back across the bottomless levels of the Mattapony. However, the South was well satisfied with the result. When Lee visited Richmond, a little later, the authorities informed him that the war was substantially over—the fight was won.

Lee knew better. And the others were to have a rude awakening. Lee knew that his resources were being steadily exhausted, and that those of the enemy were inexhaustible.

Lee was at this time at the zenith of his fame as a successful general, yet was never more modest. His letter of Christmas Day, 1862, to his wife is full of the spirit of the man in his most intimate moments. He writes: "I will commence this holy day by writing to you. My heart is filled with gratitude to God for the unspeakable mercies with which He has blessed us in this day; for those He has granted us from the beginning of life, and particularly for those He has vouchsafed us during the past year. What should become of us without His crowning help and protection? Oh! if our people would only recognize it and cease from vain self-boasting and adulation, how strong would be my belief in final success and happiness to our country. But what a cruel thing is war to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world, to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world! I pray that on this day, when only peace and good-will are preached to mankind, better thoughts may fill the




FREDERICKSBURG—POSITION OF UNION AND CONFEDERATE FORCES ON DECEMBER 13, 1862

hearts of our enemies and turn them to peace. Our army was never in such good health and condition since I have been attached to it. I believe they share with me my disappointment that the enemy did not renew the combat on the 13th. I was holding back all that day and husbanding our strength and ammunition for the great struggle for which I thought I was preparing. Had I divined that was to have been his only effort, he would have had more of it. My heart bleeds at the death of every one of our gallant men."

Should the portrait of a victorious general be drawn, I know no better example than this simple outline of a Christian soldier drawn out of his heart that Christmas morning in his tent, while the world rang with his victory of two weeks before. It is a portrait of which the South may well be proud.

## XI

### CHANCELLORSVILLE

BUT again we have, following on his success in the defence of Fredericksburg, the proof of Lee's boldness in offensive operations, which resulted in what is esteemed among foreign military critics as the most brilliant action, not only of the Civil War, but of the century.

With a vast expenditure of care and treasure, the armies of the Union were once more recruited and equipped, and the command of the Army of the Potomac was, as we have seen, intrusted to General Hooker—"Fighting Joe Hooker," as he was called—whose reputation was such that he was supposed to make good at once all the deficiencies of McClellan and Burnside. He had shown capacity to command a corps both in the West and the East, and was given to criticising his superiors with much self-confidence. His self-confidence was, indeed, so great that it called from Mr. Lincoln one of those remarkable letters which he was given to writing on occasion. He says: "I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the gov-

ernment needed a dictator. Of course, it is not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. . . ." The situation of the Confederacy was at this time, however the glamour of Lee's victory may have blinded the authorities, steadily growing more precarious. The far South-west was substantially cut off. In Kentucky and Tennessee the Union arms had prospered; and along the seaboard of the Carolinas, from New-Berne south the Confederate forces had much to do to hold their own. The North had now some 900,000 men in the field and the South less than two-thirds of that number.

In the spring the interior of Virginia and Richmond itself were threatened from Fortress Monroe and Suffolk, on the south side of the James, and a requisition was made on Lee by the government in Richmond to send Longstreet with sufficient troops to make Richmond secure. Accordingly, although Ransom had already gone with 3,600 men, Longstreet was now sent, with the gallant divisions of Pickett and Hood, to take care of "the south side," thus cutting down Lee's army by some 20,000 veteran troops. Lee, who was not deceived by

the enemy's movements, instructed Longstreet to so "dispose his troops that they could return to the Rappahannock at the first alarm." But this proved impossible. Just when the Union authorities had learned, says Henderson, not to interfere with their general's plans, the Confederate authorities took it up. Contrary to Lee's expressed request, Longstreet, who wished to go, was sent to Suffolk, a hundred and twenty odd miles from Lee, and when Hooker moved, Longstreet was not able to rejoin Lee in time to aid him.

The plan on which Hooker now proceeded is acknowledged to have been well conceived, and it gave promise of victory. Lee had fortified the right bank of the river for something like forty miles from Banks's Ford, above Fredericksburg, to Port Royal, below, and these fortifications were filled with the victors of Fredericksburg. It would not do to attack him in front; but Hooker, who had taken a firm grasp of the situation, felt that he could attack him in the flank and with his great army crush him. In the full assurance that he had "the finest army in the world" and would soon be "holding the strongest position on the planet," he elaborated his plans with care and prepared to deliver the assault which should force Lee from his defensive position, with the alternative of the capt-

ure of his entire army. Possibly, he ranked Lee as a captain good for defensive operations alone. If so, his error cost him dear. While he was congratulating himself on his tactics, and issuing grandiloquent proclamations to his eager yet untried army in the tone of a conqueror, declaring that the enemy must come out from his breastworks and fight him on his own ground, "where certain destruction awaited him," or else "ingloriously fly," Lee performed the same masterly feat which he had already performed before Richmond and in the Piedmont, and with yet more signal success. Detaching Stonewall Jackson from his force in front of Sedgwick, he sent him around Hooker's right at Chancellorsville, and while the latter was congratulating himself that Lee was in full retreat on Gordonsville, he fell upon him and rolled him up like a scroll. Unhappily, his great lieutenant who performed this feat fell in the moment of victory, shot by his own men in the dusk of the evening as he galloped past from a reconnoissance. Possibly, Hooker's army was saved by this fatal accident from capture or annihilation that night. For when, a week later, Stonewall Jackson, still murmuring of his battle-lines, passed over the river to rest under the shade of the trees, it was with a fame hardly second to that of his great captain.

Such in brief was the campaign which ended at Chancellorsville. In more detail—and it deserves more detail—it was as follows:

In fact, Lee had intended to assume the offensive himself as soon as it was possible to move, and had been prevented from doing so before only by the condition of his horses, the want of feed for them, and of supplies for his men. The conquering enemy before which his victorious army finally melted away was already encompassing his lines, impregnable to any other foe, and no strategy nor tactics, however masterly, no constancy, however unconquerable, could hold it back. He might fill his wasted ranks even though it took "the seed-corn of the Confederacy" to do it, but he could not subsist his army nor equip them to march. Whatever delusions the government in Richmond had as to the coming of peace, he had none. He had already written that he might "have to yield to a stronger force than General Burnside," and all winter as he lay in his trenches after Burnside's defeat, contained by that "stronger force" than the great army opposite him, he was "haunted by the idea of securing the provisions, wagons, and guns of the enemy."* Ten days before Hooker

* Letter of Lee to General Trimble, March 8, 1863, War Records, XXV, part II, p. 658.

moved, Lee had written an urgent letter to President Davis stating that he considered it "all important that we should assume the aggressive by the 1st of May," adding that if he could be placed in a condition to make a vigorous advance at that time, he thought the valley could be swept of the enemy and the army opposite be thrown north of the Potomac. He appears, indeed, to have taken "our old friend, J. H.," as he speaks of him, rather humorously; for he wrote on the 26th of February: "General Hooker is obliged to do something. I do not know what it will be. He is playing the Chinese game, trying what frightening will do. He runs out his guns, starts his wagons and troops up and down the river, and creates an excitement generally. Our men look on in content, give a cheer, and all again subsides *in statu quo ante bellum.*" *

Such was the temper of general and men when Hooker finally fulfilled Lee's prophecy and did "something."

On the 27th of April, Hooker, who had worked hard to get his army in shape, began his movement to destroy Lee, as to the success of which neither he nor his army had the least doubt. Nor, except for the genius of his opponents and the con-

* Letter to his daughter Agnes, February 26, 1863.

stancy of the men they commanded, was there much room for doubt. He had 130,000 men and 448 guns; Lee had 62,000 men and 170 guns.* Hooker would divide his army, with one part threaten him, with the other manœuvre him out of his position, and uniting his own forces on the field of battle, crush him by sheer weight. His line of communication with the Potomac was securely protected by the Rappahannock; so he moved at ease. While Sedgwick, with two corps, the First and Sixth, was ordered to cross the Rappahannock below Lee's fortified position at Fredericksburg, threaten his right flank, and assail his lines of communication with Richmond, following him up if he retreated, Hooker, with the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps and Pleasanton's brigades of horse, marched up the river, crossed it high up beyond Lee's extreme left, and prepared to assail his rear. His army was in as fine spirits as himself, and it responded cheerfully to his eager urging.

With a view to drawing off Lee's cavalry and cutting his line of communication, Hooker had sent his own cavalry under Stoneman to operate toward Orange Court House and Gordonsville and the Virginia Central Railroad. But Stuart knew

* Bigelow's "Chancellorsville Campaign," pp. 21, 262.

the situation too well to be drawn off at such a critical juncture, and having sent a regiment or two under W. H. F. Lee to follow Stoneman in his raid, he applied himself to his proper duty of hanging on the flank of Hooker's advancing columns and furnishing Lee with information as to his movements and strength. As Hooker advanced, the alert cavalry general detached a regiment to retard him, and making a detour with one of his brigades, flung himself across the routes leading to Lee's communications. On the morning of the 28th of April, Lee received from him the news that Hooker was moving in force toward Kelly's Ford, well to his left, and next evening he received the further information that a corps had crossed that afternoon at Ely's Ford and Germana Ford. He thereupon brought Jackson up from below to Hamilton's Crossing, and he promptly sent Anderson with his division to Chancellorsville, a point of junction of the roads leading from Orange Court House and the fords of the Rapidan and Rappahannock, with orders to fortify the best positions commanding the roads. Meantime, equally interesting information came from the southward. Jackson sent him word on the morning of the 29th that, under cover of the fog, Sedgwick had laid down his bridges and was crossing in force at

Deep Run, where he was protected by his powerful batteries on the Stafford Heights. Lee was in good humor; "something" was being done, and he would now be able to do something himself. His remark to the staff officer bringing him Jackson's report was a jocular one: "Well, I heard firing, and I thought it was time some of you lazy young fellows were coming to tell me what it was about. Tell your good general that he knows what to do with the enemy just as well as I do." Next morning came the further information from Stuart that the troops that had crossed the Rapidan in Lee's rear were the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps, and that their commanders, Meade, Howard, and Slocum, were with them. Also, that Anderson was falling back. Thus, it was known to Lee that the main body of Hooker's army was over the river, marching on him to crush him. Jackson wished to attack Sedgwick, who had intrenched himself on the river under cover of the tremendous batteries on the Stafford side. But Lee deemed this as impracticable as it was at the first battle of Fredericksburg. "It was," he said, "hard to get at the enemy, and harder still to get away if we drove him into the river." Nevertheless, such was his confidence in his lieutenant, that he told him that "if he

thought it could be done," he would "give orders for it." Jackson, however, on examining the ground, came to the same conclusion with Lee, and Lee, leaving Early with 10,000 men, including his reserve artillery under General Pendleton—some 50 guns—to hold Sedgwick in check, with the rest of his army turned on Hooker, a dozen miles away, marching on his rear through the forests of Spottsylvania. Jackson was sent to relieve Anderson, who had taken and intrenched a position along a stretch of rising ground facing the roads by which Hooker was advancing through the wilderness.

Fortunately for Lee, Hooker's self-assurance appears to have left him suddenly when he came face to face with the situation he had developed. He had laid out a good plan, and had carried it through to a considerable extent with marked success, and to his own entire satisfaction. Sedgwick (with three army corps) had easily crossed the river below Lee's right and was ready, as directed, to co-operate with Hooker. The latter's own large army had marched swiftly and was in the highest spirits, and he was now well in Lee's rear, in a position which he declared "the strongest on the planet."* According to current report

* C. Schurz's "Autobiography."

he had even asserted that "God Almighty couldn't prevent his destroying the rebel army," a speech which is said to have "created great uneasiness even to the most irreligious." * Yet, as he passed mile after mile into the tangles of the Spottsylvania wilderness, he suddenly hesitated and paused in his advance. Whether the Federal commander was momentarily overcome by the magnitude of Lee's fame, or whether by the terrifying mystery of the shadowy silences stretching before him, from which no word had come since he crossed the Rappahannock and turned southward, or whether there was a personal reason, all of which have been asserted, he halted and began to boast of his achievement. He issued an order to his army as if he were already a victor. He declared that "the operations of the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps have been a succession of splendid achievements." Yet they had done nothing but march, and, according to some of his own officers, felt that this was sheer gasconade. He announced further that "the operations of the last three days have determined that the enemy must either ingloriously fly or come out from behind his defences and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him." This

* Bigelow's "Chancellorsville," p. 237.

was nearer the truth, and was quite true except the last conclusion, which the event was to prove quite false. It was this pause and this misplaced confidence in the Federal commander which gave Lee his opportunity.

When Hooker crossed the Rapidan, the region into which he plunged after leaving the open country is one which, since the earliest advent of the white man on the continent, has amply justified the name by which it is known—"the Wilderness." A densely wooded, rolling plateau stretches nearly twenty miles in extent each way. Too poor to be cultivated successfully, it has remained substantially as it was when the white man first came, an almost impenetrable jungle of scrubby growth, which used to be known as "the Poisoned Lands." A few small streams, locally termed "runs," steal through it, and in a few places the land was found good enough to pay for clearing and cultivating; but for the most part it remained forest and thicket, given up to the denizens of the forest, the deer, the 'possum, the wild turkey, and the raccoon. Governor Spottswood established an iron furnace within or near its borders as far back as the middle of the eighteenth century, and at the time of the war some of his descendants still attempted to work the not very

remunerative ore which existed in certain places, to which fact was due in part the success of Lee's contemplated plan. Three or four roads only ran through this Wilderness in the direction of Fredericksburg. Two of these, running generally eastward—the first, known as the Turnpike, leading from Kelly's Ford, on the Rappahannock, and Germana Ford, on the Rapidan, and the second, the Orange Plank Road—united at a point where stood a church known as "Wilderness Church," and a tavern called Dowdall's Tavern, about four miles west of the Cross Roads, known as Chancellorsville, a plantation on a high plateau, eight or ten miles from Fredericksburg. At Chancellorsville the roads met and crossed a third road, leading from Kelly's Ford, on the Rappahannock, by way of Ely's and Germana Fords, on the Rapidan, and dividing again, ran separately for several miles toward Fredericksburg, then, uniting once more, they formed one road to Fredericksburg. Toward the western part of the Wilderness, a few miles west of Chancellorsville, ran north and south, at nearly right angles to these highways, a country road known as the Brock Road, leading to Spottsylvania, and where the Brock Road made a curve, across the arc, a mile or so further west lay a narrow country road screened, like the

others, by woods. On the eastern side of the Wilderness, to the north-eastward of Chancellorsville, following generally the course of the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg, was the River Road, which was united with the others at Chancellorsville by a road which crossed the Rappahannock at the United States Ford. One other way cut through the Wilderness almost due east and west, several miles south of the Turnpike and Plank Roads—an unfinished railway, laid off from Fredericksburg toward Orange Court House. Thus it will be seen that Chancellorsville, on open and rising ground, where three of the four principal roads through this wooded Wilderness met, was a point of the greatest importance. And this all the leaders knew. This point Hooker had now secured.

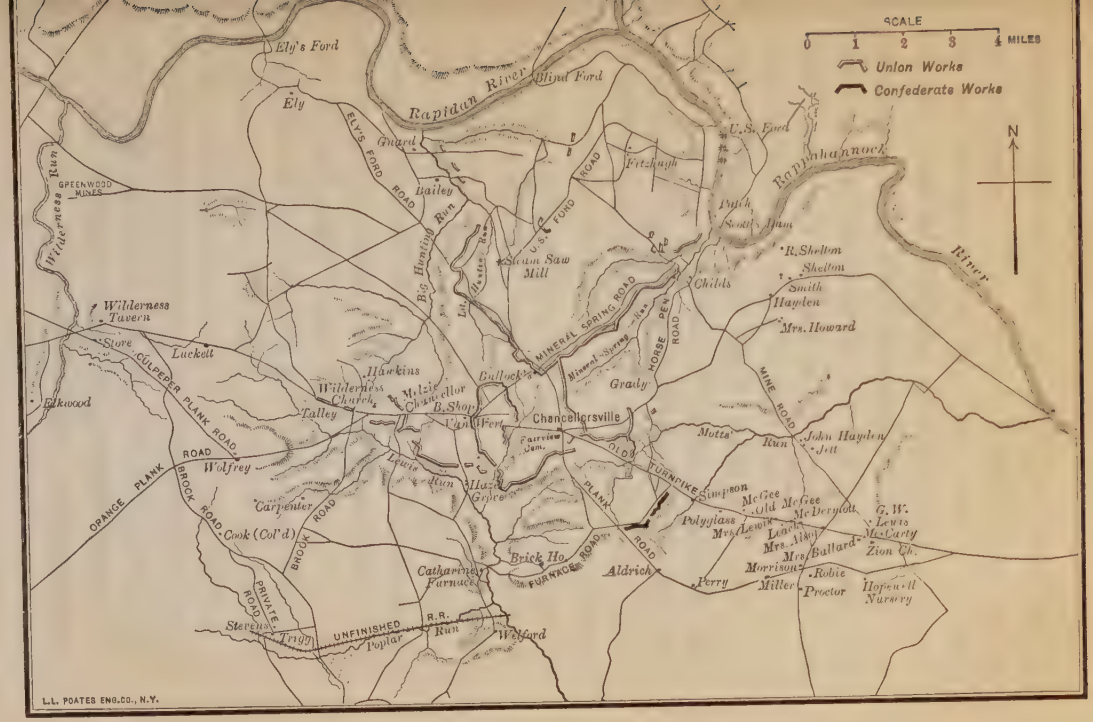
When Jackson, about eight o'clock on the morning of the 1st, reached the line where Anderson had intrenched across the roads, several miles east of Chancellorsville, he, by Lee's orders, at once abandoning the breastworks, advanced on Hooker, who, established in his strong position at Chancellorsville, was now beginning to advance once more. It is possible that this battle was won the moment Jackson passed beyond Anderson's intrenchments. From this time Hooker

lost all initiative and fought almost wholly on the defensive. Jackson soon came on the Federal cavalry, moving in advance of the columns which Hooker was now moving forward. Anderson was put in advance, with McLaws following, together with Jackson's own troops, and moving forward by both the Turnpike and Plank Roads, the cavalry was soon driven in. Then, as he advanced farther, McLaws, on the Turnpike, found his way barred by infantry and artillery posted beyond an open field, and it was necessary to deploy his brigades to turn their flank before proceeding onward. Jackson, on the left, advancing along the Plank Road, likewise found his way barred by an advancing column, and was obliged to flank with a brigade along the unfinished railway to the enemy's right before he could advance farther. This done, however, the Confederates followed the retiring Federals, until toward sunset Lee, who was personally present, found himself immediately in front of Hooker's army of some 70,000 men, posted on the plateau of Chancellorsville in the position which Hooker had boasted was his "own ground," and "the strongest position on the planet." Hooker's left rested on the Rappahannock River, covering the United States Ford, to which a road led from

Chancellorsville; his centre occupied the rise that covered the Cross Roads at Chancellorsville, and, extending westward, took in the eminences of Fairview and Hazel Grove, while his right, refused, stretched westward through the forest and ended no one knew where. Of the strength of this position Lee himself has spoken.

This was the position which Lee proposed to attack before Sedgwick could come up, wherever the weakest point should be found. He immediately had the enemy's front carefully reconnoitred and himself reconnoitred personally the position of the left wing, resting on the Rappahannock, behind a stream known as Mineral Spring Run. It was found too strong to attack in front—at least at night—and Lee halted and formed line of battle across the Plank Road, a couple of miles from Chancellorsville, his left extending toward Catherine Furnace, above which Hooker's right centre lay in force. Into the bivouac where Lee and Jackson consulted, in a pine thicket near the Plank Road, came Stuart that evening with important information which solved the difficulty. General Fitz Lee, reconnoitring around the enemy's right wing miles to the north-westward, had discovered that this wing, where were posted the German divisions of Howard, rested in the

air, having no protection but the woods and a couple of regiments refused with an ordinary breastwork. It presented a better chance of turning than Porter had presented at Gaines's Mill. The attempt, however, was full of danger, first in that it divided Lee's army, already numerically far below that which it confronted; and secondly, in that it was necessary to pass the flanking column entirely across the front of Hooker's centre and right, posted in line of battle, and he might, if active enough, strike it on the march and smash it to pieces. Lee and his lieutenants, however, were prepared to take all necessary chances where the reward was so promising, and after a conference the audacious plan was decided on. The forest would partly conceal the movements, and Stuart would use his cavalry as a screen and cover to the moving troops. McLaws was ordered to protect his position in Hooker's front by as strong intrenchments as possible, and Jackson was given charge of the flanking force, numbering about 25,000 men. He sent his engineers to ascertain if any other road than the Plank Road led through the forest toward the south-west, and on learning from a gentleman who lived near by that a new way or road had recently been cut to haul cord-wood to a furnace,




UNION AND CONFEDERATE WORKS AROUND CHANCELLORSVILLE

he informed General Lee that his troops would move at once. The order was soon given, and as the day broke, the Second Corps, with Fitz Lee's Cavalry (the 2d Virginia, commanded by Colonel Munford, in the lead) covering the front, took the road to the south-west, leaving Lee with only Anderson's and McLaws's Divisions, some 10,000 men, to hold in check Hooker's powerful army. Audacity has rarely gone further, and never was it better rewarded. Throwing forward skirmishers, and opening with his artillery from every eminence, Lee made a demonstration which kept Hooker well occupied. The movement of Jackson's column was seen, the dust rising high above the trees, and was reported to Hooker early in the morning, but he jumped to the conclusion that the enemy, finding him too strong on ground chosen by himself, had taken the other alternative that he had set for him and was ingloriously flying. Lee, he believed, forced by Sedgwick from the direct line of retreat on Richmond, was retreating on Gordonsville. Though at times he wavered as he consulted his maps and ejaculated that it was not like Lee, nearly all day long he labored under this delusion. As at a certain point Jackson, with baggage trains, etc., turned almost due south down a valley, it was not, perhaps, unnat-

ural that this should have appeared to the Federal commander a flight. The moving column was shelled vigorously from the high plateau on Hooker's right, known as Hazel Grove, and Sickles was sent with his corps to cut up the moving force, but he met with such a reception from Anderson, on Lee's left, and made such slow progress, that he called for reinforcements, and Howard, holding Hooker's extreme right, was directed to send him a brigade, and despatched Barlow, with the brigade which formed his reserve, to Sickles's aid, thus weakening the very point against which Lee had sent Jackson to address his attack. As Sickles with Pleasanton's cavalry began to make progress, Jackson sent back the brigades of Archer and Thomas, and Brown's battalion of artillery, to aid Anderson; but, unswerved from his design, with the rest of his force he pushed on south-westward, till he reached the road he was seeking—a road west of the Brock Road, running north and south well beyond the extreme end of Hooker's right. Here turning northward, Jackson struck for the point where this road crosses the Plank Road, some two miles west of Hooker's extreme right, which it was planned to destroy. Reaching the Cross Roads about two o'clock, he received from General Fitzhugh Lee, who had halted

here, the information that the enemy were apparently wholly ignorant of his approach, and by proceeding a mile or so farther on to the Turnpike, he might strike Hooker's right in the rear. It has been related that, riding forward with General Fitz Lee, attended by a single courier, he sought the hill-top from which Lee had discovered the facts he disclosed, and found the situation still unchanged. Lee speaks of "the commander of the cavalry accompanying him," but does not say it was himself, and it seems certain that Munford with the Second Virginia Cavalry was in the lead all the time. A few hundred yards below them to the eastward was the end of Hooker's line and fortifications, heavily protected in front with abatis, but resting on nothing that could afford protection, and "untenanted by a single company." The men were scattered about in groups, loafing, gossiping, playing cards, drawing rations, and cooking, while their arms were stacked as though they were in a summer encampment. Lee says that Jackson's eyes "burnt with a brilliant glow" while he scanned the extraordinary scene, but he uttered no words though his lips moved. Then suddenly turning to his courier he gave his orders: "Tell General Rodes to move across the Plank Road and halt when he gets to

the old turnpike; I will join him there." He turned back and scanned the scene again and then rode rapidly down the hill.*

By four o'clock, or a little after, the divisions which had turned back to balk Sickles's advance on the turning point were coming up, and Rodes was deploying his men in line of battle across the turnpike, enveloping Howard's still unsuspecting right, still engaged in getting supper and amusing themselves. Hooker, himself, was equally unsuspecting. On being informed in the morning that Lee was crossing his front, he had notified Howard to look to his right and secure it, and Howard replied that he had done so; but after Sickles drove his way through toward where Jackson turned south, he returned to his complacent belief that Lee was fleeing or preparing to do so. And at four o'clock, just at the time that Jackson was preparing to strike home, he sent an order to Sedgwick to capture Fredericksburg and everything in it as soon as preparations permitted, and "vigorously pursue the enemy. We know," he added, "that the enemy is fleeing, trying to save his trains. Two of Sickles's divisions are among them." It was a fatal error into which he had fallen, and to his undoing. Howard also held this view.

* F. Lee's "Lee."

It was near six o'clock when, everything being in readiness, his men in two lines of battle, with columns in support, and all orders given for the advance to roll up the enemy's right and sweep forward, Jackson gave Rodes the word to go forward. At the sound of a bugle, re-echoed from right to left where the divisions were posted in battle line awaiting the signal, the lines swept forward, skirmishers in advance, and driving the startled denizens of the forest scurrying before them, broke through the woods on the equally startled line of Howard's Germans. Twenty regiments of Howard's corps lay in the trenches, along which Jackson's cheering battle lines were sweeping; but beyond them was a gap of over a mile, left by the withdrawal of Sickles and of Barlow's reserve brigade. Thus, though they attempted to make a stand, and, Schurz declares, withstood the shock for nearly a half hour, they were soon swept away in utter rout and panic. Beyond them another brigade, facing to the right, attempted to stay the fierce surge of Jackson's lines; but every mounted officer was struck from his horse by the rain of bullet and canister, and, after a gallant but hapless effort, they too were swept into the rout. In the open lay other German regiments trying to stem the tide, while on

the opposite ridge across the wide clearing, from breastwork and rifle-pit blazed the fierce fire of Howard's last brigade, checking for a few moments the steady onsweep with rifle fire and canister; but Rodes, dashing forward, cleared the field, and then rushing up the ridge drove on with resistless force into the red flame pouring from the long line of breastworks, and climbing the parapets, swept away the last remnant of Howard's corps, Hooker's right wing. The rout of this corps was now complete and hopeless, and it demanded good generalship and great courage in line and staff not to have it extended to the next command in the same degree. While this catastrophe was befalling his right wing, Hooker is said to have been seated on the portico of the Chancellor mansion, congratulating himself on the success of his well-matured plan. About him were staff officers who, like him, believed that Lee's second corps was in full retreat and could well be left to Sickles and Pleasanton and Barlow till such time as he should have rolled back the rest of Lee's army and taken up the pursuit. Orders had already been given to his left to advance and overwhelm what remained in their front. It was all like a dream that has been realized. From this dream the Federal commander was rudely awakened.

From his right down the aisles of the Wilderness came suddenly the sound of battle—not of skirmishing, nor of a mere reconnoissance such as cavalry might have made, but of furious battle, and nearer and nearer it rolled, while at the same time increased on his front the fight which had proceeded all day where Lee in person was keeping his centre occupied. So near and astonishing rolled the din of battle on the right that the officers rose and sought their horses, and one of them, going down to the road, gazed westward. The sight he saw in the distance was one to astound him. "My God! here they come," he cried, and dashed for his horse. The distant road was packed as far as the eye could see with the terrible débris of a routed army—men, horses, wagons—all mingled in one indiscriminate and terrible panic. Happily for Hooker he had as brave and devoted men about him as ever faced death for a cause, and he had troops enough to fill any breach which Lee's army could make and still leave others behind. Officers and couriers were sent in all directions to order fresh troops to the threatened point. Sickles and Pleasanton and Barlow were summoned back to Hazel Grove to fill the gap they had left in the morning. Berry and Hays were transferred from beyond Chan-

cellorsville, and the reserve artillery was rushed forward to the Fairview Heights, south-east of Hazel Grove, to hold Jackson in check at all hazards and, if possible, save Hooker's army. It was a close graze, but though the defeat was irrevocable, the army was saved from destruction by an event which is one of the strange tragedies of history. Jackson, in the hour of victory, was shot by some of his own men. This is how it happened.

It was nearly dusk, and still Jackson kept driving on. His objective now was Hooker's centre at Chancellorsville, a mile and a half ahead, and his line of retreat on the United States Ford Road, a half mile beyond. Riding among his victorious but wellnigh exhausted troops, he continually urged them to keep their order. "Keep your places—keep your places; there is more work to do," he said to the officers. But his own work was almost done.

Though so far Lee's audacious tactics had attained complete success, they were now to result in a misfortune, at the cost of which, as he said on hearing it, any victory would be dear. As the dusk fell on Hooker's extreme right wing in irrevocable rout, fleeing behind the protection of the artillery massed on the eminence of Hazel

Grove, near his right centre, Jackson, finding the pursuit slacken in the confusion of the dusky woods, and fearing to lose the richest fruit of his brilliant victory, rode forward on a reconnoissance, giving orders right and left, to such officers as he saw, to get their men in order and "push forward." "Push right ahead, Lane; right ahead," he said to one; to another: "Press them; cut them off from the United States Ford, Hill; press them." His lines were being straightened out for the next onward sweep on Chancellorsville itself, and he passed on through them, along the Plank Road toward where the Federal reserves were, with flying axes and bayonets, industriously trying with Berry's troops to get some sort of intrenchments and barricades along the Fairview Heights before the next onslaught came. As he passed forward he, with a wave of the hand toward the front, directed an officer of an infantry regiment lying in a small clearing to watch in that direction and fire on whatever came from there. Having ridden so close to the Federal lines that their voices and axes could be clearly heard, he turned back, it is said, to hasten Hill's advance, and a moment later the road on which he was riding was swept by a sudden storm of canister from guns posted on the enemy's line to sweep the highway.

Swerving aside to get out of the line of fire directly down the road, Jackson and his attendants turned at a gallop in the darkness into the clearing, almost immediately in front of the infantry line which he had a little before ordered to fire on whatever came from that way. They obeyed his command all too well. As the group of horsemen emerged with a rush from the wood and galloped down on them in the dusk, and the guns rattled in the thickets behind them, from the dark line stretched across the clearing came a blaze of fire, and Hooker's army was saved from instant destruction. In the midst of the most brilliant achievement of his brilliant career, Stonewall Jackson's career ended and passed into history. At the first unexpected volley a number of men fell dead or badly wounded and others flung themselves from their horses to avoid the next volley. Jackson's right hand was hurt and his left arm and shoulder were badly shattered. His horse, terrified and suddenly released from the master's guiding hand, wheeled and dashed back into the wood toward the enemy, where the overhanging boughs tore the rider's face and almost swept him out of the saddle. Jackson, however, managed to keep his seat, and after a little stopped him, and turned back toward his own lines, where

Captain Wilbourn, of his staff, having caught the reins, the survivors of those with him lifted him down and made him lie on the ground to avoid the rain of bullets that was now sweeping over them. Hill had now come up and recognized him, and Morrison and Smith and Leigh, of Hill's staff, aided him to move on toward his own lines, and when a sleet of bullets and canister swept about them, laid him down in the ditch beside the road and protected him by interposing their own bodies between him and the line of fire. For a moment the range shifted, the enemy having changed from canister to shell, and again they moved on painfully. Then Jackson gave his last battle order. General Pender riding by, pushing his brigade to the front under the terrible fire, saw the sad procession, and asked who was hurt. "A Confederate officer," was the reply, in accordance with Jackson's command. But Pender recognized him, and springing from his horse, spoke his grief. Then he added that the artillery fire was so deadly that he was afraid he should have to fall back. The words aroused Jackson from his half-fainting condition. Pushing aside those who supported him, he raised himself to his full height. "You must hold your ground, General Pender. You must hold out to the last,

sir." It was the epitome at once of his own life and of the Southern cause. It was his last order until, with the light fading from his eyes forever, as he was passing over the river to rest under the shade of the trees, he murmured once more for A. P. Hill to pass his infantry forward. As he was being borne from the field on a litter carried on men's shoulders, the man at his wounded shoulder was shot down and the litter fell, throwing Jackson heavily on his wounded shoulder, and he sustained an injury to which later many attributed his death. At 2 A. M., by the fitful light afforded in a field hospital, his arm was amputated. As he regained consciousness his first question, it is said, was whether Stuart had received his order to take command. When toward morning Stuart, who had arrived after midnight from Ely's Ford, where he was about to attack Averell's cavalry force and had taken charge, sent Major Pendleton to announce that Hill had been seriously wounded, and the men were in great confusion, and to ask what he wished done, he made a brave attempt to rally his sinking forces, but in vain. "For a moment," says Dr. McGuire, "we believed he had succeeded; for his nostrils dilated and his eye flashed with his old fire; but it was only for a moment. His face

relaxed again, and presently he answered, very feebly and sadly: 'I don't know, I can't tell. Say to General Stuart he must do what he thinks best.' And he sank again into sleep."

To Jackson's fall, at the moment when his victorious troops should have been pressing forward with their irresistible force to capture Chancellorsville and the road to the United States Ford, Henderson and most other well-informed critics attribute the failure to destroy utterly Hooker's army that night. Hill, who alone knew anything of his plans, had been seriously wounded also, and Boswell, Jackson's engineer, sent to pilot the advancing line to the White House, had been killed. The respite gained by his fall enabled Hooker to readjust his lines and cover his right with the corps of Couch and Slocum, and to send Sickles, who had come hurrying back to the strong position at Hazel Grove and supported Pleasanton's artillery posted there, to make about midnight a strong assault on Stuart's right where, south of the Plank Road, Lane's hard-fought brigade awaited them in the woods, while the artillery tore the tree tops and cut down great boughs above their heads. The assault was repulsed; but the commanding position of Hazel Grove and Fairview Heights, between Jackson's

force and Lee's, which Jackson would inevitably have carried had he been able to make his next assault while the panic lasted, was saved. And Lee had to fight again next day with all his might to reap the fruits of his audacity. Happily for his army, his genius was equal to the emergency.

No one knew so well as Lee the magnitude of the disaster that had befallen him in the loss of Jackson. He had early gauged his abilities as a soldier. On the 2d of October, 1862, after the battle of Sharpsburg, when the Army of Northern Virginia was reorganized in two corps, Lee, in recommending Longstreet and Jackson for their respective commands, wrote of Jackson: "My opinion of General Jackson has been greatly enhanced during this expedition. He is true, honest, and brave; has a single eye to the good of the service, and spares no exertion to accomplish his object." His opinion of him had steadily risen. The two men thoroughly understood and honored each other and were worthy of each other's regard. When Lee learned of Jackson's wound, he sent him a warm message. "Give him my affectionate regards, and tell him to make haste and get well and come back to me as soon as he can. He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right." And later he wrote: "Any vic-

General Thomas J. Jackson.

From a photograph taken in Winchester, Virginia, 1862.

tory would be dear at such a price. I know not how to replace him." His formal letter was written on the evening of the morrow of Jackson's fall, when having carried by assault Hooker's first lines, and supplanted him in the position which he had boasted the strongest on the planet, he received a note telling him of Jackson's wound. Surrounded by his victorious troops in the full tide of their triumph, he penned to his wounded lieutenant his reply:

General: I have just received your note informing me that you were wounded. I cannot express my regret at the occurrence. Could I have directed events, I should have chosen, for the good of the country, to be disabled in your stead.

I congratulate you upon the victory which is due to your skill and energy.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. E. Lee, *General.*

No wonder his staff officer, who received his reply from him, says that "as he gave expression to the thoughts of his exalted mind, he forgot his genius that won the day in his reverence for the generosity that refused the glory."

Had Hooker been the equal of his antagonists, he had a great opportunity on the morning of

the 3d. He held with a superior force a position between them strongly fortified, and the heights of Hazel Grove and Fairview, extending southwardly, cut them in two. But he fatuously threw away his advantage. He withdrew Sickles from Hazel Grove. Lee sent word across the wide gap to renew the assault at the earliest moment possible, and when the first light came and disclosed the commanding position of Hazel Grove as the key to the situation, Stuart immediately prepared to seize it. Swinging his right around and forward to get closer to Lee, he began a furious assault, and although the strong point of Fairview was long defended with the utmost bravery, in the end the Confederate veterans, by this time informed of their old commander's fall, and charging with the battle-cry, "Remember Jackson!" swept all before them, securing the strong position of Hazel Grove. Lee on his side directed the assault with confidence. Shaken by the misfortune to his right wing, Hooker was already looking to his safety, and was endeavoring to withdraw to a second and closer line, well in rear of Chancellorsville, lying above and between Fighting Run and Mineral Spring Run and covering the United States Ford Road, his line of retreat. Heth, on the left, commanding

Hill's Division, came forward, Anderson and McLaws on the centre and the right, where Lee himself in person directed his fervid veterans. It was a fierce day, for Hooker's army knew that their salvation depended on holding Lee back. Fairview, where the enemy was strongly posted with thirty guns heavily supported, took long to capture. For hours the battle raged through the woods, which were now aflame for miles and added to the horror of the occasion. The utmost courage was shown on both sides. Hill, on the left, was repulsed again and again, but his second and third lines came forward to aid the first line. So resolute was the resistance that at one time all three of his lines were mingled together, and once word was sent to Stuart that the ammunition was exhausted and they would have to fall back; to which Stuart replied, as Jackson would have done in his place, that they still had the bayonet. Thirty guns under the gallant officers, Colonel Thomas H. Carter and Colonel Hilary P. Jones, were massed on the captured heights of Hazel Grove, and enfiladed with deadly effect the lines of the Federals, and Stuart, putting himself at the head of his troops and chanting, "Old Joe Hooker, won't you come out of the Wilderness?" led them in a final charge on the

intrenchments which swept everything before it. Hooker's right having been thus broken, a general advance made with unflinching determination swept him back all along his line, leaving Lee in possession of Chancellorsville and the whole position which Hooker had held.

During the morning the Federal commander was struck down by a fragment of a shattered pillar of the porch of the Chancellor mansion, which was shivered by a cannon-ball, where he stood superintending his operations. The report spread that he was killed, and to contradict it, as soon as he recovered consciousness he mounted his horse and rode down his lines. He was, however, unable to remain in the saddle, and was in a state of semi-consciousness from time to time, the command devolving temporarily on Couch.

As his lines swept forward on Chancellorsville, driving the fiercely fighting enemy before them, Lee himself rode forward to encourage his men and to take charge of the position. It was the signal for what soldiers rarely see even once in a lifetime. His already victorious troops were set wild by his presence, and in the midst of the horrors of the field acclaimed him to the skies, the wounded adding their feeble voices to the

cheers of those who still fought the guns. "His first care," says one of his staff, "was for the wounded of both armies, and he was foremost at the burning mansion [of Chancellorsville], where some of them lay."

It was at this moment that the note reached him from Jackson, announcing that he was badly wounded, and that he sent him the reply that the victory was due to his skill and energy, and that could he have directed events, he would have chosen for the good of the country to be disabled in his stead. It was characteristic of Jackson, when his admired commander's noble reply was brought to him where he lay wounded, to say: "General Lee is very kind, but he should give the praise to God."

## XII

### LEE'S AUDACITY—SALEM CHURCH

HOOKER'S first positions had been carried, and Lee was ready to assault the second position, where, behind the strong fortifications which he had prepared for the emergency, Hooker, now much shaken, had made his final stand, when information arrived which must have discomfited a less resolute and constant mind. The news reached Lee that Sedgwick, who had hitherto been held on the river by Early, and had recrossed to the northern side, had now not only recrossed again, but had carried Marye's Heights, driven Early back, and intervened between him and Lee, and was marching by the Plank Road with his force of 30,000 men on Lee's rear. In fact, Hooker had sent Sedgwick urgent orders to come to his aid. Lee had already 60,000 men in his front in line of battle, and if Hooker was stunned and shaken, he had at his side such redoubtable fighters as Meade, Slocum, Humphreys, Couch, Reynolds, Sickles, and Pleasanton, with a host besides. But the *mens æqua*

*in arduis* which inspired Lee's breast was equal to this difficulty also. Wilcox's Brigade, of Anderson's Division, lying above Banks's Ford at the point nearest to Sedgwick's route, was ordered to retard his advance, and, to bar his way, McLaws was despatched to Salem Church, the point of junction of the roads from Banks's Ford with the Plank Road from Chancellorsville to Fredericksburg. When Sedgwick broke through Early's line on the heights of Fredericksburg, Early fell back, covering the road to Richmond. Sedgwick then pushed away the small force on his right, and was now driving for the rear of Lee's right. Wilcox, across the Plank Road, fought stubbornly as he fell back to Salem Church, where, deploying his men under cover of the woodland, McLaws awaited Sedgwick's advance across the open fields in his front. The unexpected fire at close range was deadly, and advancing two of his brigades at the nick of time, he drove Sedgwick's first line back on his rear, which had not yet got deployed. "Now ensued," says Alexander, "one of the most brilliant and important of the minor affairs of the war." The fight, though short, was bloody, and Sedgwick, having lost something like 5,000 men, was content to make a stand on the ridge

above Banks's Ford, which he fortified strongly. Next morning, in view of the gravity of the situation, with 60,000 men in his front and twenty-odd thousand but a few miles behind him, Lee himself took personal charge of the operations. Leaving "only what remained of Jackson's old corps"—some 20,000 men—to hold Hooker in his breastworks, he took Anderson's three remaining brigades to Salem Church, and as soon as Sedgwick's new position could be reconnoitred, he ordered the assault. It was a brief fight, for it began late, but it was fierce while it lasted. Assailing, however, both in front and flank, Lee's ragged veterans drove the enemy from their position with a heavy loss, and that night, under cover of the rain and fog, Sedgwick, who had been left by Hooker to fight alone, withdrew across the Rappahannock by the nearest ford, leaving Lee to turn again on Hooker, penned in his fortifications by Lee's containing force of one-third of his numbers.* Lee promptly led back to Chancellorsville his victorious brigades to fall on Hooker as they had just fallen on his lieutenant.

Hooker, however, had no stomach for more,

* Steele's "American Campaigns," p. 351, citing Swinton and E. P. Alexander.

and that night (the 5th) while Lee was making ready to assault him next morning, he, under cover of the storm and darkness, retreated across the Rappahannock. He was badly demoralized even if his army was not, and had allowed the plan which he had elaborated with so much satisfaction while safe beyond the Rappahannock, to be smashed in pieces by Lee when in the very act of being carried out. He had lain in his breastworks all day, held by a third of his numbers, while one of his lieutenants, in the act of executing his orders, was being hammered to pieces by Lee, hardly a half dozen miles away. No greater exhibition of daring genius on the one side and of failure on the other was shown during the war, and the charge used to be made that Hooker's defeat was due to the fact that he was under the influence of liquor; but this charge seems to have been disposed of, and it has even been suggested that the lack of stimulant was the cause of his inertia. The only other excuse that has been offered for him is, that he was knocked down and stunned during the battle. The true reason is that he had been so hopelessly outgeneralled and outfought by his opponent, that he had been thrown in a maze, in which his brain had almost ceased to act.

As soon as he was safe across the Rappahannock, he issued (on May 6th) a general order to his army congratulating it on its achievements. It contained a remarkable sentence, which will be found quoted in a letter of Lee's, below. His army had, indeed, fought admirably. The fault lay with the commander. He even wrote to Mr. Lincoln a few days later (May 13): "Is it asking too much to inquire your opinion of my Order No. 49? Jackson is dead," he added, "and Lee beats McClellan with his untruthful bulletins." Thus he achieved the distinction of being probably the only man in the world who ever charged Lee with untruthfulness. We may imagine what was the inward thought of that sometimes grim humorist. For the Army of the Potomac had lost since Hooker crossed the Rappahannock 17,287 officers and men, killed and wounded, and 13 guns, and over 6,000 officers and men were reported captured or missing. The Army of Northern Virginia had also suffered heavily—10,277 killed and wounded and about 2,000 captured or missing.*

What Mr. Lincoln thought of Hooker's order, No. 49, is possibly not known; what Lee thought is known. In a letter to his wife, dated May

* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, pp. 466, 467.

20, he writes: "I learn that our poor wounded are doing very well. General Hooker is airing himself north of the Rappahannock, and again threatening us with a crossing. It was reported last night that he had brought his pontoons to the river, but I hear nothing of him this morning. I think he will consider it a few days. He has published a gratulatory order to his troops, telling them they have covered themselves with new laurels, have destroyed our stores, communications, thousands of our choice troops, captured prisoners in their fortifications, filling the country with fear and consternation. 'Profoundly loyal and conscious of its own strength, the Army of the Potomac will give or decline battle whenever its interests or honor may demand. It will also be the guardian of its own history and its own honor.' All of which is signed by our old friend, S. Williams, A. A. G. It shows, at least, he is so far unhurt, and is so far good, but as to the truth of history I will not speak. May the great God have you all in His holy keeping and soon unite us again."

On the 10th of May Stonewall Jackson died of pneumonia, resulting from his wound. He had, for a brief period after his arm was amputated on the field, appeared to be doing well,

and hopes were entertained of his recovery. By order of General Lee he was removed from the proximity of Chancellorsville to the home of a Dr. Chandler, near Guinea Station, on the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad, some fifty miles from Richmond, where he was made comfortable in an outhouse which still stands by the railway line, having been preserved by the pious care of the women of Virginia.

The question has often been debated whether the chief credit for the victory at Chancellorsville should be assigned to Lee or to Jackson. Lee, himself, has settled it in a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Jackson, in which he states that the responsibility for the flank attack by Jackson —that is, for the tactics which made it possible —necessarily rested on himself. He repeated the statement in a letter to his friend, Professor Bledsoe. And apart from his conclusive statement, this is the judgment of Jackson's biographer, General Henderson. Commenting on the question as to whether to Lee or Jackson the credit was due for the daring plan of the campaign against Pope, Henderson says: "We have record of few enterprises of greater daring than that which was then decided on; and no matter from whose brain it emanated, on Lee fell the

burden of the responsibility; on his shoulders, and on his alone, rested the honor of the Confederate arms, the fate of Richmond, the independence of the South; and if we may suppose, so consonant was the design proposed with the strategy which Jackson had already practised, that it was to him its inception was due, it is still to Lee that we must assign the higher merit. It is easy to conceive; it is less easy to execute. But to risk cause and country, name and reputation, on a single throw, and to abide the issue with unflinching heart, is the supreme exhibition of the soldier's fortitude." *

It is, indeed, no disparagement from Jackson's fame to declare that, if possible, even more brilliant than the afternoon attack on Hooker's right, which routed that wing and began the demoralization of his army, was the final attack, when Lee, who had left Early with only enough men at Fredericksburg to hold Sedgwick in check, learning that Sedgwick had forced a crossing and was marching on his rear, turned and, leaving only a fragment of his army to hold the shaken Hooker in his breastworks, fell on Sedgwick and hurled him back across the river, and then, turning again, marched on Hooker's position and

* *Ibid.*, II, p. 582.

so awed him that he was glad to retreat by night, broken and dismayed, across the Rappahannock.

The victory of Chancellorsville, in which Lee with 62,000 men and 170 guns completely routed Hooker on his own ground, with 130,000 men and 448 guns, was, declares Henderson, "the most brilliant feat of arms of the century."

Thus, Lee had destroyed the reputation of more generals than any captain had destroyed since Napoleon.

After Chancellorsville the Army of Northern Virginia was reorganized in three corps instead of two, as formerly. Longstreet commanded the first, as heretofore, now commanding the three divisions of McLaws, Pickett, and Hood; and Ewell and A. P. Hill were created lieutenant-generals for the purpose, and were put in command of the Second and Third Corps, respectively, the former comprising the three divisions of Rodes, Early, and Johnson; the latter the three divisions of Anderson, Heth, and Pender. Thus, Ewell became Stonewall Jackson's successor.

To each corps were attached five battalions of artillery, two of which were in reserve, the total number of guns being 270. The total number of troops of all arms was 68,352, of which

54,356 were infantry, 4,460 were artillery, and 9,536 were cavalry. "This artillery organization was," says Steele in his "American Campaigns," "the first of its kind ever employed, and it has since been adopted by the leading nations of Europe."

It was a fighting force which in its personnel has rarely been equalled in the history of war, composed largely of that volunteer soldiery, animated by love of country and the spirit of free institutions, which so good a critic as Stonewall Jackson declared the best soldiers on earth. Lee's confidence in them was displayed when, a little later, he threw them against Meade's imposing position on the heights of Gettysburg, in the great strategic move which he was even now planning. With the object of guarding the capital of the Confederacy against another attempt such as he had already frustrated four times, at such cost to the South, Lee was now planning carrying the war into Africa. To do this with the greatest possible assurance of success attainable, it was necessary to have as strong an army as possible. Sharpsburg had shown that neither gallantry nor brilliant handling of men was sufficient to render invasion successful when it brought into the field such an army as

the North could oppose to it. And as moderate as was the size of Lee's army now, there was always danger that he might be called on to detach a part of his force to protect distant fields. Longstreet had been detached before Chancellorsville to defend the approaches on the south side of the James, in Virginia, and this possibly had enabled Hooker to escape across the Rappahannock. Such, indeed, was Henderson's opinion. Now, the whole seaboard of the South was in deep anxiety, and the clamors of the political representatives of the threatened regions were unremitting. Lee had the responsibility of defending Richmond and of conducting the war; but he lacked the power to dispose of the troops in the field so as best to carry out the plans which he believed necessary for the proper performance of his task. As has been already said, the form of government of the Confederacy, however suited for peace, was inefficient for the conduct of a great revolution. So many conflicting interests had to be reconciled, so many selfish ambitions reckoned with, so many divergent views harmonized, that in times of crisis the exigencies often came and passed before the proper authority requisite to provide means to meet it could be secured. The present crisis

furnished an illustration of this unhappy condition.

It was plain enough to Lee's clear vision what steps should be taken to meet this situation; but he lacked the means to make his views effectual. He was not thwarted and set aside as the commanding generals on the Union side were, but he was impeded and hindered in his plans by the action of the government, who, whatever the emergency, felt called on to consult the views of those they represented. He wrote on June 13 to the Secretary of War: "You can realize the difficulty of operating in any offensive movement with this army, if it has to be divided to cover Richmond. It seems to me useless to attempt it with the force against it. You will have seen its effective strength by the last returns." Mr. Davis wrote him, a few days later, that the attempt was being made to organize a force for local defence, and that he hoped it would be possible to defend the city without drawing from the force in the field more heavily than may be necessary for the duty of outposts and reconnoissances. But General Lee had a bolder and loftier object in view than the mere defence of Richmond. He would by his strategy not only relieve Richmond, but possibly secure peace.

And he saw clearly that the chances of peace were dependent on his success, as he saw that his chances of success were dwindling with his dwindling resources.

"At this distance," he wrote Mr. Davis, "I can see no benefit to be derived from maintaining a larger force on the southern coast during the unhealthy months of summer and autumn, and I think that a part at least of the troops in North Carolina, and of those under General Beauregard, can be employed at this time to great advantage in Virginia. If an army could be organized under the command of General Beauregard, and pushed forward to Culpeper Court House, threatening Washington from that direction, it would not only effect a diversion most favorable for this army, but would, I think, relieve us of any apprehension of an attack upon Richmond during our absence. . . . If success should attend the operations of this army—and what I now suggest would greatly increase the probability of that result—we might even hope to compel the recall of some of the enemy's troops from the West. . . . The good effects of beginning to assemble an army at Culpeper Court House would, I think, soon become apparent, and the movement might be increased

in importance as the result might appear to justify."

And again, under date of the 25th of June, to President Davis, he wrote: "You will see that apprehension for the safety of Washington and their own territory has aroused the Federal Government and people to great exertions, and it is incumbent upon us to call forth all our energies. In addition to the 100,000 troops called for by President Lincoln to defend the frontier of Pennsylvania, you will see that he is concentrating other organized forces in Maryland. It is stated in the papers that they are all being withdrawn from Suffolk, and according to General Buckner's report, Burnside and his corps are recalled from Kentucky. . . . I think this should liberate the troops in the Carolinas, and enable Generals Buckner and Bragg to accomplish something in Ohio. It is plain that if all the Federal army is concentrated upon this it will result in our accomplishing nothing and being compelled to return to Virginia. If the plan that I suggested the other day, of organizing an army, even in effigy, under General Beauregard at Culpeper Court House, can be carried into effect, much relief will be afforded. If even the brigades in Virginia and North Carolina, which

Generals D. H. Hill and Elzey think cannot be spared, were ordered there at once, and General Beauregard were sent there, if he had to return to South Carolina, it would do more to protect both States from marauding expeditions of the enemy than anything else. I have not sufficient troops to maintain my communications, and therefore have to abandon them. I think I can throw General Hooker's army across the Potomac, and draw troops from the South, embarrassing their plan of campaign in a measure, if I can do nothing more and have to return." *

It was a tragic situation, this general, on whose genius hung the fate of the Confederacy, begging in vain for an army, "even in effigy," to post on his flank and afford him some relief while he pursued the strategy which alone could save his cause.

* Colonel W. H. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 216.

## XIII

### GETTYSBURG

POSSIBLY, it may appear to some a fault in Lee as a soldier that he accounted the abilities of his enemy at less than their true value. Study of the war must lead to the conviction that neither courage nor fortitude was the monopoly of either side. The men who withstood at Gaines's Mill and Malvern Hill the fierce charges of the Southern infantry; the men who marched down the rolling plain of Second Manassas against Stonewall Jackson's lines of flame, and dashed, like the surging sea, wave upon wave, on Lee's iron ranks at Antietam; the men who charged impregnable defences at Marye's Heights; the men who climbed the slippery steeps of Chattanooga and swept the crimson plain of Franklin; the men who maintained their positions under the leaden sleet of the Wilderness and seized the Bloody Angle at Spottsylvania; the men who died at Cold Harbor, rank on rank, needed to ask no odds for valor of any troops on earth, not even of the men who followed Lee.

In a recent discussion of this subject, the philosophical Charles Francis Adams, himself a veteran of the Army of the Potomac, whose laurels were won in opposing Lee, quotes with approval Lee's proud declaration that "there never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything if properly led." "And for myself," he adds, "I do not think the estimate thus expressed was exaggerated. Speaking deliberately, having faced some portions of the Army of Northern Virginia at the time, and having reflected much on the occurrences of that momentous period, I do not believe that any more formidable or better organized and animated force was ever set in motion than that which Lee led across the Potomac in the early summer of 1863. It was essentially an army of fighters—men who individually or in the mass could be depended upon for any feat of arms in the power of mere mortals to accomplish. They would blench at no danger. This Lee from experience knew. He had tested them; they had full confidence in him."*

Lee's error, such as it was, lay not in overrating his own weapon, but in undervaluing the larger weapon of his antagonist. Yet, if this

* Address at Lexington, Va., cited *ante*.

underrating of his enemy was a fault, it was a noble one; and how often it led to victory! Lee's success was due largely to his splendid audacity.

If, in attacking the redoubtable forces of Meade on the heights of Gettysburg, he overestimated the ability of that army of sixty thousand Southern men who wore the gray, who can wonder? In their rags and tatters, ill-shod and ill-armed, they were the flower of the South. Had he not seen them on every field since Mechanicsville? Seen them, under his masterly tactics and inspiring eye, sweep McClellan's mighty army from the very gates of Richmond? Seen them send Pope, routed and demoralized, to the shelter of the fortifications around Alexandria? Seen them repel McClellan's furious charges on the field of Antietam, and hold him at bay with a fresh army at his back? Seen them drive Burnside's valorous men back to their intrenchments? Seen them roll Hooker's great army up as a scroll and hurl it back across the Rappahannock? What was disparity of numbers to him? What strength of position? His greatest victories had been plucked by daring, which hitherto fortune had proved the wisest of calculation, from the jaws of apparent impossibility. Besides, who knew so well as he the neces-

sity of striking such a blow? The South-west was being gradually conquered. Grant's brilliant work before Vicksburg had almost completed what Fort Donelson and Shiloh had begun. Vicksburg, the last stronghold of the Confederacy on the Mississippi, was in the last throes of a fatal siege, and, on the same day that Lee faced his fate at the heights of Gettysburg, fell before the indomitable Grant, and the Confederate South was cut in two. His delivering battle here under such conditions has been often criticised. He is charged with having violated a canon of war. He replied to his critics once that even so dull a man as himself could see clearly enough his mistakes after they were committed.

This battle has been fought over so often that it is not necessary to go fully over its details now, and yet in a volume which deals with Lee's military genius some account is necessary of the great battle which appears to have been the turning point of the great civil strife. Gettysburg was only one factor in the unbroken chain of proof to establish his boldness and his resolution. Southern historians have unanimously placed the chief responsibility for his defeat on Longstreet, whose tendency to be dilatory and obstinate has been noted in connection with the

fields of Seven Pines, Frazier's Farm, and Second Manassas, and whose slowness and surliness now probably cost Lee this battle, and possibly cost the South, if not its independence, at least the offer of honorable terms. And in this estimate of him many other competent critics concur. "Lee," says Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," "lost the battle of Gettysburg because he allowed his second in command to argue instead of marching." * It is impossible in reading his writings not to be struck by his self-esteem, and sheer jealousy is often written plain on his pages. That he should have envied Jackson and hated Early is perhaps not to be wondered at. But that he should have assailed Lee with what appears not far from rancor can only be attributed to jealousy. Lee, we know, held him in high esteem, speaking of him as his "old war horse," and was too magnanimous ever to give countenance to the furious clamor which later assailed his sturdy if opinionated and bull-headed lieutenant. It was a magnanimity which Longstreet ill requited when long afterward—years after Lee's death—he attempted to reply to his critics. Longstreet seems, indeed, to have been not unlike a bull,

* "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II, p. 488.

ponderous and dull until aroused, but once aroused by the sight of blood, terrible in his fury, and a ferocious fighter. But the question here is, Did Lee err or not in fighting the battle?

Longstreet with two divisions had been absent from Lee's army since soon after the battle of Fredericksburg. He had at his request been sent to south-side Virginia to defend the line of the Blackwater against an advance from Norfolk, on the south side of the James. In anticipation of Hooker's advance around Lee's left, he had been ordered to rejoin Lee, but "his movements were so delayed that though the battle of Chancellorsville did not occur until many days after he was expected to join, his force was absent when it occurred." * This, too, when his instructions had been "repeated with urgent insistence."

Longstreet declared long afterward that he now had a plan of his own. He not infrequently claims the credit for the plans acted on if they proved successful. His idea was that the proper strategy would be for him to join Joseph E. Johnston, then near Tullahoma, so as to enable him to crush Rosecrans; then march through Tennessee and Kentucky and threaten Ohio.

* "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government."

This view he urged both on Mr. Seddon, the Confederate Secretary of War, and on Lee himself. Neither acceded to his plan—mainly, he says, because it would force Lee to divide his army.* Assuredly a sound enough reason. His account of his interview with Lee has been noted by a thoughtful student of the Gettysburg campaign, himself a gallant participant in the battle, as reflecting Longstreet's mental attitude both toward the campaign and toward Lee.† It was, at least, not one of cordial subordination and support.

In brief, the battle of Gettysburg came of the necessity to "yield to a stronger power than General Burnside." Feeling the imperative necessity of relieving Virginia of the burden that was crushing her to the earth, Lee determined, as the summer of 1863 drew near, to manœuvre Hooker from his impregnable position on the Stafford Heights, and to transfer the theatre of war to Northern soil.

For this reason Lee, boldly flanking Hooker, who, now secure on the further side of the Rappahannock, was boasting still, marched his army into Maryland and Pennsylvania, not for con-

* Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. V, p. 55.

† "Review of the Gettysburg Campaign," by Colonel David Gregg McIntosh, p. 9.

quest, but for subsistence, and to employ once more, at need, the strategy which he knew would compel the withdrawal of the forces still threatening Richmond.

It testifies his foresight that he had already predicted that a pitched battle would probably be fought at York, or at Gettysburg.

Yet, when the time came, Lee's meeting with Meade's army at the latter place was to some extent a surprise to him; for his able and gallant cavalry commander, Stuart, on whom he had relied to keep him informed touching the enemy, had been led by the ardor of a successful raid further afield than had been planned, and the presence of Meade's army in force was unsuspected until too late to decline battle.* Heth's Division had sought the place for imperatively needed supplies, and found the Union troops holding it, and a battle was precipitated. Lee's plan of battle failed here, but the student of war knows how it failed and why. It failed because his lieutenants failed, and his orders were not carried out—possibly because he called on his intrepid army for more than human strength was able to achieve. "Had I had Jackson at

* That Stuart was in any way responsible for this is denied by Colonel John S. Mosby in his "Stuart in the Gettysburg Campaign."

Gettysburg," he once said, "I should, so far as man can judge, have won that battle."

It was the first week of June when Lee, leaving A. P. Hill to occupy the lines at Fredericksburg and cover Richmond, withdrew the major portion of his force to Culpeper, Ewell leading and Longstreet following. Lee moved secretly, sending Ewell by Spottsylvania Court House to escape observation; but observation balloons and spies discovered something of his movements to Hooker, who notified his government and without avail asked leave to "pitch into his rear." He crossed Sedgwick over the Rappahannock, on June 5, to demonstrate against Hill's right on the River Road to Richmond; but as Lee, after making a personal reconnoissance of the position, recognized the move as a feint and paid little attention to it, he withdrew Sedgwick again. Hooker now knew that Lee was beginning some movement, but thought it was merely a cavalry raid, with possibly a heavy column of infantry in support, and he sent Pleasanton with his cavalry, "stiffened by about 3,000 infantry," to disperse and destroy the cavalry forces in the vicinity of Culpeper. At Culpeper Lee waited for a few days and rested and reviewed his cavalry. Lee wrote his wife of the review. "It was a splendid sight,"

he said; "the men and horses looked well. They had recuperated since last fall. Stuart was in all his glory. Your sons and nephews are well and flourishing. The country here looks very green and pretty, notwithstanding the ravages of war. What a beautiful world God in His loving-kindness to His creatures has given us. What a shame that men endowed with reason and knowledge of right should mar His gifts." The day following this review, a short distance away on the rolling plain above Kelly's Ford, Stuart and Pleasanton, the latter, as stated, "stiffened by about 3,000 infantry," fought possibly the greatest cavalry battle that has ever taken place. Alexander's artillery was moved over in that direction, to be ready at need; but was kept in concealment, as Lee did not wish the presence of his army to be known. After several hours of stiff fighting, Pleasanton was driven back across the Rappahannock with the loss of 500 prisoners, 3 pieces of artillery, and several colors, having himself captured a good number of prisoners. Hooker, as at Chancellorsville, found this a cause of congratulation, and wrote a report quite in the tone of a victor. Pleasanton, he reported, "pressed Stuart three miles, capturing 200 prisoners and a battle-flag.

Our cavalry made many hand-to-hand combats, always driving the enemy before them."

Lee's plan now was to sweep over the mountains and on through the valley of Virginia, clearing it of Milroy's army, which was proving a pest there, cross over into Maryland, and, passing through that State, invade Pennsylvania and threaten at once Harrisburg, Baltimore, and Washington. This, he hoped, would lead to peace, or, failing this, would at least "throw Hooker's army across the Potomac."

Before leaving Culpeper, Lee, on the 10th of June, wrote President Davis the following letter, which shows how clearly he saw the need of making peace:

*Mr. President:* I beg leave to bring to your attention a subject with reference to which I have thought that the course pursued by writers and speakers among us has had a tendency to interfere with our success. I refer to the manner in which the demonstration of a desire for peace at the North has been received in our country.

I think there can be no doubt that journalists and others at the South, to whom the Northern people naturally look for a reflection of our opinions, have met these indications in such wise as to weaken the hands of the advocates of a pacific policy on the part of the Federal Government, and

give much encouragement to those who urge a continuance of the war.

Recent political movements in the United States and the comments of influential newspapers upon them have attracted my attention particularly to this subject, which I deem not unworthy of the consideration of your Excellency, nor inappropriate to be adverted to by me in view of its connection with the situation of military affairs.

Conceding to our enemies the superiority claimed by them in numbers, resources, and all the means and appliances for carrying on the war, we have no right to look for exemption from the military consequences of a vigorous use of these advantages, except by such deliverance as the mercy of Heaven may accord to the courage of our soldiers, the justice of our cause, and the constancy and prayers of our people. While making the most we can of the means of resistance we possess, and gratefully accepting the measure of success with which God has blessed our efforts as an earnest of His approval and favor, it is nevertheless the part of wisdom to carefully measure and husband our strength, and not to expect from it more than in the ordinary course of affairs it is capable of accomplishing. We should not, therefore, conceal from ourselves that our resources in men are constantly diminishing, and the disproportion in this respect between us and our enemies, if they continue united in their efforts to subjugate, is steadily augmenting. The decrease

of the aggregate of this army as disclosed by the returns affords an illustration of this fact. Its effective strength varies from time to time, but the falling off in its aggregate shows that its ranks are growing weaker and that its losses are not supplied by recruits.

Under these circumstances we should neglect no honorable means of dividing and weakening our enemies, that they may feel some of the difficulties experienced by ourselves. It seems to me that the most effectual mode of accomplishing this object now within our reach is to give all the encouragement we can, consistently with truth, to the rising peace party of the North.

Nor do I think we should, in this connection, make nice distinction between those who declare for peace unconditionally and those who advocate it as a means of restoring the Union, however much we may prefer the former.

We should bear in mind that the friends of peace at the North must make concessions to the earnest desire that exists in the minds of their countrymen for a restoration of the Union, and that to hold out such a result as an inducement is essential to the success of their party.

Should the belief that peace will bring back the Union become general the war would no longer be supported; and that, after all, is what we are interested in bringing about. When peace is proposed to us it will be time enough to discuss its terms, and it is not the part of prudence to spurn

the proposition in advance merely because those who wish to make it believe, or affect to believe, that it will result in bringing us back to the Union. We entertain no such apprehensions, nor doubt that the desire of our people for a distinct and independent national existence will prove as steadfast under the influence of peaceful measures as it has shown itself in the midst of war.

If the views I have indicated meet the approval of your Excellency, you will best know how to give effect to them. Should you deem them inexpedient or impracticable, I think you will nevertheless agree with me that we should at least carefully abstain from measures or expressions that tend to discourage any party whose purpose is peace.

With this statement of my own opinion on the subject, the length of which you will excuse, I leave to your better judgment to determine the proper course to be pursued.

I am, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

The day after the fight at Kelly's Ford, Lee sent Ewell forward by Mount Royal to the Shenandoah Valley, which he immediately cleared of the enemy. Longstreet was directed to operate so as to embarrass Hooker as to Lee's movements, and keep him east of the Blue Ridge, at

least until Hill could arrive and get in touch with Ewell, and Stuart was set to screen Lee's movements to the west of the Blue Ridge from Hooker, posted to the east of the Blue Ridge, covering the southerly approaches to Washington.

As Lee anticipated, his strategy drew Hooker back toward the Potomac, and Longstreet was moved forward on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge, while A. P. Hill followed Ewell over the mountains into the valley of Virginia, the whole being screened by Stuart's cavalry.

As late as the 12th Hooker wrote Governor Dix that "all of Lee's army, so far as I know, is extended along the immediate bank of the Rappahannock from Hamilton's Crossing to Culpeper. A. P. Hill's Corps is on his right, below Fredericksburg; Ewell's Corps joins his left, reaching to the Rapidan, and beyond that river is Longstreet's Corps." Two days from this time Ewell, who had crossed the Blue Ridge on the 12th, captured Winchester, with some 4,000 prisoners and 29 guns, together with the vast stores collected there, and barely missed capturing Milroy himself, who escaped with a small portion of the garrison.

On the night of the 13th, Hooker, knowing that Lee was engaged in some new enterprise,

but not knowing yet what it was, withdrew from before Fredericksburg and headed for the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, to cover Washington. Next day Hill, no longer needed on the south bank of the Rappahannock, marched for Culpeper en route for the valley, to overtake Lee's other corps. Lee had thus once more manœuvred a great army from an attack on Richmond to the defence of Washington. Hooker was still in a maze, and sent his cavalry westward to force Lee "to show his hand, if he had any, in this part of the country." To prevent this "a stiff fight" occurred on the 17th, at Aldie, between Fitz Lee and Gregg, and two days later Pleasanton, "stiffened by an infantry division," flanked Stuart at Middleburg and forced him beyond Upperville. Longstreet sent a division to reinforce Stuart, and on the 23d Lee wrote Mr. Davis that "the attempts to penetrate the mountains have been successfully resisted by General Stuart with the cavalry," and that the enemy had retired to Aldie.

By the middle of the month (June) Lee's advanced corps had crossed the Potomac, and Longstreet was ordered soon afterward to do the same, while Stuart was left to impede Hooker should he attempt to follow across the Potomac,

it being left to Stuart's discretion whether to cross east or west of the Blue Ridge; but on crossing he was to cover the right of the army. On the 22d of June, Lee wrote from Berryville, where A. P. Hill had just arrived, directing Ewell to move forward from Shepherdstown toward the Susquehanna, taking the route by Emmetsburg, Chambersburg, and McConnellsburg, keeping his trains on the centre route, and notifying him that Stuart had been directed, if possible, to place himself with three brigades of cavalry on his right, and Imboden had been ordered to his left. Ewell was told "if Harrisburg comes within your means capture it." On the same day Lee wrote Stuart, expressing concern lest the enemy should "steal a march on us and get across the Potomac before we are aware," and authorizing him, if he found the enemy moving northward, to leave two brigades to guard the Blue Ridge and take care of his rear, to move with his other three brigades into Maryland, place himself in communication with Ewell, and guard his right flank, keeping him informed of the enemy's movements and collecting supplies. This letter was forwarded through Longstreet, who wrote Stuart, advising his leaving by Hopewell Gap and passing in the rear of the enemy, so as not

to disclose Lee's plans. Stuart mentioned that Lee had authorized him to use his discretion.

On the 23d Lee wrote Stuart again, confirming the above, but suggesting that should Hooker appear to be moving northward, Stuart had better withdraw to the west of the Blue Ridge and cross the Potomac at Shepherdstown. He however stated that Stuart would be able to judge; he could pass around Hooker's wing and cross the river east of the mountains. "But in either case," he adds, "after crossing the river you must move on and feel the right of Ewell's troops. . . . I think the sooner you cross into Maryland, after to-morrow, the better." Stuart sent Colonel Mosby on a scout to learn if Hooker was crossing the Potomac, and received on the 24th a report that no signs of movement were found. This report was to be sent to General Lee. He moved that night to pass around Hooker's rear and cross the river at Seneca Ford. He had intended to pass through Haymarket and on through Hooker's army; but finding Hancock across his path in the Bull Run Mountains, he bore farther eastward and passed through Fairfax Station. The détour delayed his crossing of the river till the night of the 27th, when he learned that Hooker had crossed at Edward's

Ferry on the 25th and 26th, and was now at Poolesville, Md., en route for Frederick.

Meantime, Lee had passed the rest of his army to the north side of the Potomac, and Hooker's entire army was between Lee and his cavalry. Hill had crossed at Shepherdstown, and Longstreet at Williamsport, on the 24th, the day that Stuart received the report to transmit to Lee that no signs of Hooker's movements had been found. The two corps had united at Hagerstown, and on the 27th were near Chambersburg, secure in the conviction that Hooker was probably still on the south side of the Potomac or Stuart would have notified them.* Here Lee issued his famous order to his army, admonishing them to respect non-combatants and private property, and remember that the inhabitants were their fellow citizens. Ewell, marching by Hagerstown and Chambersburg, had reached Carlisle on the 27th with two of his divisions, the third, under Early, having been sent to York. Early was sent eastward across the South Mountain and through Gettysburg, York, and Wrightsville, to cross the Susquehanna by the Columbia bridge and move up the north bank of the river on Harrisburg. Crossing the South Mountain by the Chambers-

* Lee's report, dated 20th January, 1864.

burg pike, Early passed through Gettysburg on the 26th and moved on through York to Wrightsville, respectively twenty-eight and forty miles from Gettysburg, and was preparing to cross the river when he received orders to rejoin Lee. Ewell, at Carlisle, was about to set out for Harrisburg, whose defences were already being studied by his engineers. It was not until the next night (28th) that Lee learned through a scout that momentous events had taken place in the past few days along the Potomac; that Hooker had crossed the river; had then been relieved and superseded by Meade, and that Meade was now concentrating in his rear between him and Washington. Hooker, on crossing the Potomac, had telegraphed Halleck that he wanted the garrison from Harper's Ferry and Maryland Heights—some 10,000 men—and on Halleck's refusing, on the ground that Harper's Ferry was the key to the situation, he had replied that the key was of no use when the lock was broken, and asked that his resignation be accepted. This was promptly done—the authorities, possibly, not being sorry to get rid of another ill-starred commander—and to the surprise of many, who had expected Couch or Reynolds to succeed him, Meade was not only placed in command,

but was given the troops which were refused Hooker. Meade, bearing to the eastward and keeping Washington and Baltimore covered, continued to march northward toward where Lee was throwing Pennsylvania into a panic. Extended as he was over nearly fifty miles in a hostile country, it behooved Lee to get his army together before he attacked or was attacked by an enemy which so largely outnumbered him, and he proceeded to do so.

Stuart meantime, acting in the discretion accorded him by Lee, had passed in the rear of Hooker and crossed the Potomac at Seneca, barely a dozen miles from Washington, and had moved on northward between Hooker and Washington, capturing a great wagon-train at Rockville, cutting up the railway and telegraph, and drawing after him all the Federal cavalry available. His march was made with his usual swiftness, but as the Federal army was between him and the Confederate columns, he did not know where the main army was until the night of the 1st of July, when, having ridden around Gettysburg, he reached Carlisle on his way to the Susquehanna. That day Lee's army had fought the first day's battle of Gettysburg. Leaving Carlisle at once, Stuart rode for Gettysburg, where he arrived next afternoon.

While Stuart was riding around the Federal army, Lee was meeting the new situation presented to him by the unexpected proximity of Meade's army on his flank. On learning that Meade was so near, Lee promptly decided to concentrate his forces on the east of the mountains. Orders were issued immediately for his troops to turn and concentrate about Cashtown or Gettysburg. Ewell received the order at Carlisle as he was about to set out for Harrisburg, his instructions recalling him first to Chambersburg and then "to proceed to Cashtown or Gettysburg, as circumstances might dictate," and Hill was ordered to Cashtown, to the northwestward of Gettysburg, to which place a turnpike ran, with Longstreet following next day. Ewell immediately turned back; on the night of the 29th his trains were passing through Chambersburg, his three divisions moving on Gettysburg from the north. On the same day that Ewell arrived at Carlisle, the 27th, Longstreet and A. P. Hill reached the vicinity of Chambersburg. Up to this time no information had come from any source of the approach of the Federal army, and it was not until the night of the 28th that Lee was apprised by one of his scouts that the army had not only crossed the Potomac several days before but was now near South

Mountain. A. P. Hill was, on the 29th, encamped on the road from Chambersburg to Gettysburg, and that day he moved Heth's Division from Fayetteville, where Anderson was left, to Cashtown, on the eastern side of the South Mountain, eight miles from Gettysburg, while Pender's Division followed to the western foot of the mountain.

On the morning of the 30th, Pettigrew's Brigade, of Heth's Division, was ordered to the little town of Gettysburg, a few miles southward, to get shoes and other supplies, of which it stood sorely in need, and found it occupied by the enemy, who were not known to be nearer than fifteen miles away. Pettigrew withdrew and bivouacked. The rest of Lee's army, on the night of the 30th, was placed as follows: Johnson's Division, of Ewell's Corps (four brigades—Jones's, Williams's, Walker's, and Stuart's), was near Fayetteville, on the Chambersburg Pike, seventeen miles north-west of Gettysburg; Early's Division, with four brigades (Gordon's, Hays's, Hoke's, and Smith's), was at East Berlin, on the York Pike, fifteen miles north-east of Gettysburg; Rodes's Division, five brigades (Daniels's, Ramseur's, Iverson's, O'Neal's, and Doles's), was at Heidlersburg, ten miles north of Gettysburg. Of Hill's Corps, Heth's Division, three brigades

(Archer's, Davis's, and Brockenborough's), was at Cashtown, eight miles north-west of Gettysburg; Pender's Division, four brigades (Thomas's, Lane's, Scales's, and McGowan's), was on the west side of the mountain, a few miles farther away, while Anderson's Division, beyond them, was at Fayetteville, seventeen miles from Gettysburg.

Longstreet, leaving Pickett's Division at Chambersburg to guard the rear, moved his other divisions (Hood's and McLaws's) on the 30th to Greenwood, fourteen miles north-west of Gettysburg, where Lee had his head-quarters, and "bivouacked about 2 P. M." Lee, at Greenwood, wrote on the 30th, ordering Imboden to take Pickett's place, so that the latter could move next day to Cashtown, where he proposed to establish his head-quarters. He had no new information as to the movements of the Federal army, and was sending out scouts to find Stuart. Stuart on the same day was riding northward from Westminster, Md., toward Hanover, Pa. on the way to Harrisburg.

On the day following (July 1), while Hill and Ewell were fighting the first day's battle about the town of Gettysburg, Longstreet's two divisions were moved forward, and they bivouacked

that night on Willoughby Run, only three or four miles from the battle-field.

On the same day that Lee was moving southward toward Gettysburg, the 30th, Meade was moving northward along lines which would bring him nearer to Lee's route, and would at the same time cover Washington and Baltimore. That day he established his head-quarters at Taneytown, Md., thirteen miles south of Gettysburg, having moved from Frederick, and set his engineers to work to reconnoitre and prepare defences for a pitched battle along the line of Pipe Creek, a few miles to the south of Taneytown. Reynolds, who commanded his left, consisting of the First, Third and Eleventh Corps, with Buford's cavalry, was sent forward toward Gettysburg to find and draw Lee on to a battle on the ground which Meade had chosen along Pipe Creek. The Fifth Corps was moved toward Hanover, fourteen miles south-east of Gettysburg; the Twelfth Corps was pushed forward that night on the Baltimore Pike to within ten miles of Gettysburg; the Second Corps was at Queentown, and the Sixth Corps was at Manchester, thirty-four or thirty-five miles to the south-east half way to Baltimore. On the evening of the 30th, Reynolds had pushed forward to Gettysburg, through which

two of Buford's brigades of cavalry (Devin's and Gamble's) had passed to picket the roads from the north, while that night the First Corps bivouacked five miles south of the town, and the Third and Eleventh Corps bivouacked at Emmetsburg, ten miles south of the town.

It seems clear that while each side knew that the other was not far distant, and that a great battle was imminent, neither anticipated that the battle would be fought at Gettysburg.

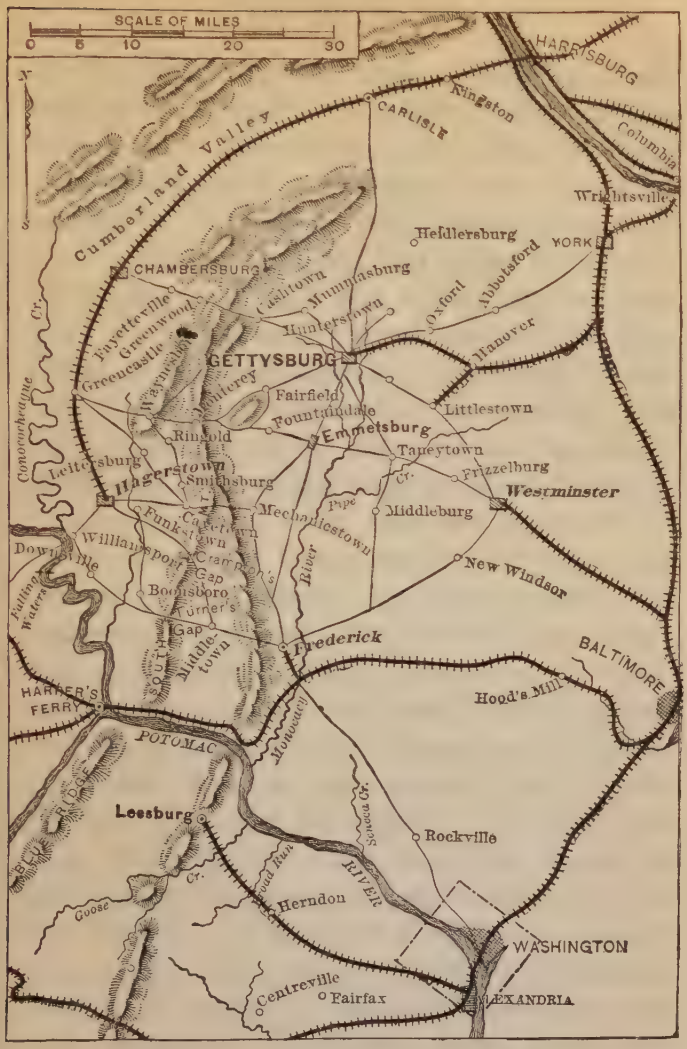
The battle-field of Gettysburg lies in a piedmont region, in a fertile, rolling country of farms and hamlets, for the most part open, but interspersed with woodland, divided by ridges running mainly north and south, with streams running between them, and in places broken by sharp though not high spurs, covered with boulders and clad with forest. The little town which gives its name to the battle lies on the slope at the northern end of one of these ridges, which rises somewhat abruptly at its back, and is crowned there by the cemetery from which it takes its name. This ridge throws out a curving spur to the eastward, known as Culp's Hill, around which runs Rock Creek, but the main backbone of the ridge extends south by southwest for some two miles, and after sinking in

the middle, rises again, and ends in two sharp, wooded spurs which are known respectively as Little and Big Roundtop. The ground between the end of the eastern curve—Culp's Hill—and the southern portion of the ridge is much broken, but is traversed by roads which afford ready access from one to the other. On either side east and west of this ridge, at the distance of a mile or so, and divided from it by open valleys filled with farms and orchards, lie other ridges; that on the west was known as Seminary Ridge, from the Lutheran Seminary, which rose near its northern end.

On the morning of the 1st of July, the nearer troops to Gettysburg on both sides were set in motion for that place, while those farther away continued their general line of march, leading to the concentration about Gettysburg, which had been ordered. Hill, moving on Gettysburg from the westward, sent word of his movement to Ewell, who was some miles farther away, and who likewise set his troops in motion. Lee's orders to his lieutenants were to confine any action which the meeting with the enemy might necessitate to a reconnoissance, and not bring on a general engagement. This was because of the dispersed condition of his own army and

his ignorance of the disposition of the enemy. General Lee arrived at Cashtown on the morning of July 1, whence Heth had been sent that morning by Hill with orders to ascertain the force of the enemy; but if he found infantry in force to report the fact and not force an engagement. Meade's orders to his lieutenants were to fall back, if pressed, to the position which he had selected north of Emmetsburg, where he would probably be in a position to fight a defensive battle. As late as 12.30 on the 1st, his chief of staff wrote Buford, whose cavalry was then engaged beyond Gettysburg, to withdraw to Frizzelburg. At this time Hill had two divisions up, and the third not far in the rear, and Ewell was on his way.

Heth's Division, moving south-eastwardly along the Chambersburg Pike from Cashtown, eight miles away, toward nine o'clock came on Buford's pickets about a mile and a half from Gettysburg, and on these being driven in, encountered his dismounted cavalry, well posted on both sides of the road, on a commanding ridge to the west of the town. With Archer's Brigade on his right, and Davis's on his left, supported by Pegram's and McIntosh's Battalions, Heth pushed forward, crossed Willoughby Run, and passed




GETTYSBURG AND VICINITY

up the slope, where to their surprise they were met by two brigades of the First Corps (Cutler's brigade and Meredith's "Iron Brigade") and were driven back with heavy loss. Reynolds, moving to Gettysburg with Wadsworth's division, on hearing the firing, had ridden ahead, and, on finding that Hill was advancing, had sent word to Meade and hurried forward the First Corps to Buford's support. Conducting Wadsworth's division from the Emmetsburg Pike north-westward under cover of the woodland, he formed them on the ridge up which Heth was advancing. In a short time the remainder of the Federal First Corps, under Doubleday, had arrived on the ground, and when Archer, who had come under heavy fire from the crest above and obliqued to the right, penetrated the woodland in his advance, he found himself flanked and cut off by the Federal troops, and in retreating across the run was captured with a considerable portion of his brigade. Near the same wood Reynolds was killed about this time as he was placing his troops, and the command of the Federal force on the field devolved on Doubleday, until a little later, when Howard appeared a little in advance of the Eleventh Corps and took command. The fighting during these hours

was hardly excelled during the war. Brigades were decimated; regiments on both sides were captured and recaptured.

The fight, though not so celebrated, was as fierce and deadly as on any of the succeeding days. On the Federal side, the Eleventh Corps came up to the assistance of the First, and Howard, who as ranking officer assumed command of the field, sent urgent messages to Slocum and to Sickles to hasten to his support. Each side fought with the most desperate valor. There were times when the opposing ranks delivered their deadly volleys almost in each other's faces. Heth was nearly spent, when soon after two o'clock Rodes's Division, which on hearing the firing had been turned to the eastward and marched to the sound of the guns, came on the field deployed for action, and Hill, who appeared to be waiting for Ewell, now on his appearance sent Pender in. The fighting was renewed with redoubled fury; but in the nick of time Early came up on Rodes's left and gave a new impulse to the Confederate attack. Gordon, pushing forward against Barlow on the Federal right centre, and favored by a wide gap between Barlow and Schurz, carried the hill to the north-east of the town and drove Barlow's men back on the

town. Barlow himself was left for dead on the field, but happily recovered to add later to his reputation as a gallant and able officer. His men were driven with great loss from the crest which they had held so stoutly, and were pushed down into and through the town.

The sweep of Pender's fresh troops added new fire to the Confederates, and rushing forward all along the front, they finally forced the Federal lines from their position, covering the town from north-east to south-west. The Eleventh Corps, driven down into the town, encountered there the rest of Early's Division, who had entered the town by the York Pike to the eastward, and, becoming a confused mass, were captured to the number of several thousand. The remainder of them retreated through and beyond the town to the heights above it, known as Cemetery Ridge, and were followed by Early's Division until the latter were recalled by Ewell's command. The First Corps, which held on longer, was eventually forced back likewise, and was driven across the valley to the west of the town, still fighting as it retreated.

Lee had arrived on the scene about two o'clock, having heard the sound of battle while he was riding toward Cashtown. A message from Hill

informed him of the situation, and Lee, having ordered Anderson forward from Cashtown, rode on with his staff—riding too hard for the corps commander with him. He arrived in time to see the enemy driven through the town. He appears to have been content with the way things had progressed, and about half-past two or three o'clock he sent Colonel Taylor, of his staff, to say to General Ewell that from where he was he could see "those people" retreating up the heights "without organization and in great confusion," that it was only necessary to press them to secure possession of the heights, and that, "if possible, he wished him to do this." Ewell, however, seems to have been personally spent, and to have thought that his men were equally so, and Lee's order had contained the proviso, "if possible." They had, indeed, been marching and fighting together for twelve hours; but had he called on them for a final effort, it seems beyond question that they would have swept on and carried the heights.

Hancock, who on the announcement of Reynolds's death had been sent forward by Meade to take over the command of the forces on the field, thought that the hill might have been captured by Ewell at that time had he pursued Howard's

corps, but not after he himself arrived and made his dispositions for defence. He says: "When I arrived upon the field, about 3 P. M., or between that and 3.30 P. M., I found the fighting about over; the rear of our troops were hurrying through the town, pursued by the Confederates. There had been an attempt to reform some of the Eleventh Corps as they passed over Cemetery Hill, but it had not been very successful. I presume there may have been 1,000 or 1,200 organized troops of that corps in position on the hill." In addition to these, Steinwehr's brigade alone occupied the heights.

Had Ewell not stopped the pursuit it is beyond question that Meade's army would have concentrated, as he had already ordered, along the Pipe Creek line.

General Ewell "deemed it unwise to make the pursuit," for fear, probably, as Taylor conjectures, of bringing on a general engagement. However this was, the pursuit was not pressed, though Gordon, who was in the full tide of victory, required three or four orders "of the most peremptory character" before he stayed his eager troops. Ewell not only halted his men and thus lost the golden opportunity presented of seizing the Ridge, whose possession two days

later decided the issue of the battle and possibly that of the war, but he sent Johnson's Division around Culp's Hill, where it was isolated.

It was a stubborn and bloody conflict, with from 22,000 to 24,000 men on either side, and while it resulted in a clear victory for the Confederate troops, who not only swept the field but captured some 5,000 prisoners, including two generals, the loss on both sides was heavy. On the Confederate side the losses were about 2,500 killed, wounded, and missing, and among them Heth and Scales had been wounded, and Archer had been captured. On the Union side the losses in killed and wounded were not less, and they had lost over 5,000 men captured, while Reynolds, the able commander of the First Corps, had been killed.

That night the Federals fortified the heights, and as during the ensuing hours new troops came pouring in by forced marches, the lines were rapidly strengthened with intrenchments. At the time, however, when Ewell halted, the commanding position of Culp's Hill was unoccupied. Hancock states that he ordered Wadsworth's division and a battery to take position there in the afternoon. But two of Ewell's staff officers reported to him that they were on the hill

at dark. That night Lee held a conference in Gettysburg, at which were present Longstreet, Ewell, Hill, Rodes, Early, and Long, who has reported what occurred. "Longstreet gave it as his opinion that the best plan would be to turn Meade's left flank and force him back to the neighborhood of Pipeclay Creek. To this General Lee objected, and pronounced it impracticable under the circumstances." And later when Long, who had been directed to reconnoitre the Federal position on Cemetery Ridge, reported against a renewal of the attack that evening, he decided to make no further advance that evening, but to wait till morning to follow up his advantage. "He turned to Longstreet and Hill, who were present, and said: 'Gentlemen, we will attack the enemy in the morning as early as practicable.' In the conversation that succeeded, he directed them to make the necessary preparations and be ready for prompt action the next day." Such is Long's account of this conference.*

On leaving the conference of the generals, General Lee informed General Pendleton, his chief of artillery, that he had ordered Longstreet to attack the enemy early next morning.

* Long's "Memoir of Lee," p. 277.

This Longstreet has denied.* But it is certain that Lee expected him to do this, and there is, in addition to Lee's declaration at the meeting, the testimony of many officers† and the evidence of his own movements and demeanor the following morning. He was on the ground the following morning at daybreak, and all who saw him testify to his eager expectation of Longstreet's appearance and his impatience at his delay.‡ "Longstreet is so slow!" he exclaimed.

* *Philadelphia Times*, Nov. 3, 1877.

† See reports of Generals Anderson and Wilcox; also General Early's statement: Southern Historical Society Papers, December, 1877, pp. 269, 285, 286. Lee's "Memoir of William N. Pendleton," p. 292.

‡ "Next morning," writes one of his officers, speaking of the second day, in which his battalion rendered signal service, "about 9 A. M., while reconnoitring that region south-west of Big Roundtop, I ran across General Lee, with two or three couriers, riding through the wood. He called me to him and asked: 'Have you seen General Longstreet or any of his troops anywhere in this neighborhood?' I answered that I had not. Then, getting a glimpse of a small body of men on foot moving along the edge of the woods, he despatched one of his couriers to learn who they were. He then asked me how far I had been toward the mountain, pointing toward Roundtop, and my object in being out there, etc., and then as soon as the courier returned, he asked: 'Are they Longstreet's men?' The answer was: 'They are not; but a small detachment returning to their command in the direction of Gettysburg.' Then, showing disappointment and impatience by his manner and tone, he said: 'I wonder where General Longstreet can be? . . .' This incident tends to confirm the belief, wellnigh universal among Confederates, that Longstreet was responsible for the loss of the battle." (Communicated to the writer by Colonel William T. Poague, from a manuscript prepared by him "for the information of his sons.")

At this hour only the Second Federal Corps, a division of the Twelfth and a division of the Third occupied the heights. Little Roundtop was not occupied, no guns were on the key to the field.

Meade, at Taneytown, Md., thirteen miles away, with the Second Corps, received Hancock's report of the situation that first afternoon and, issuing orders with a promptness which bore rich fruit, marched for the heights commanding the battle-field, where he arrived at one in the morning. There was a discussion as to the availability of the position, and Meade at one time thought of withdrawing from it; but Hancock rode in person to urge the stand on this field. The Fifth Corps, that evening, was at Union Mills, twenty-three miles away, and the Sixth Corps was at Manchester, thirty-four to thirty-six miles away. Lee's army lay close to the battle-field, and might attack before his troops got up, or might interpose between him and Washington.*

Longstreet says he himself opposed further fighting there. Lee, however, was ready for the fight, and, relying on his officers and men, believed he could destroy Meade in detail. In the

* Meade to Halleck. Despatch, 2 P. M., July 2, 1863.

light of his failure some historians now criticise sharply his decision. Let us see. At daybreak Lee himself was ready and waiting for the battle to begin; but Longstreet, who the evening before had been averse to attacking, says he sought him out again at daybreak and renewed his views against making the attack on this side, an expostulation which caused Lee to send a staff officer to Ewell to ascertain whether, after examining the position by daylight, he could not attack. The position in front of Ewell was, however, now too strongly fortified to make an assault possible, and Meade, in contemplation of assuming the offensive, was massing his forces there. Lee even rode himself to confer with Ewell, but, finding what the situation was, adhered to his original decision and ordered Longstreet at eleven o'clock to attack as already directed.*

Even then, however, Longstreet held back, whether from obstinacy and refractoriness, or because "his heart was not in it" longer, or because he felt the situation hopeless—the two former of which reasons have been charged against him, and the last of which has been claimed

[1] Henderson's Review of Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox." (*Journal of Royal United Service Inst.*, October, 1897.)

by him—has ever been a question hotly debated. However it was, though his troops, except one brigade—Law's—were encamped close to the battle-field, he failed to move until half the day had been lost, because, as he said, he hated to go into battle with one boot off; and when he moved, Roundtop was fully protected. Meade had changed his plan of attacking with his right, and had strengthened his left; Sedgwick's corps, the Sixth, had come up after an epoch-making march of thirty-four miles since nine o'clock the night before, and was in position, while Longstreet sulked and dawdled with his eager troops awaiting orders on the edge of the battle-field.

Even as it was, in the furious battle which took place that afternoon when Longstreet at last began to fight, Lee seized the elevation in front of his right, held it for some time, and passed beyond it, turned Sickles's left, and made a lodgement on Little Roundtop, which Meade declared "the key-point of his whole position," and held it with his brave Alabamians until driven back by the Fifth Corps, massed for the purpose, and this, if held, would, Meade states, "have prevented him from holding any of the ground he subsequently held to the last."

Lee's plan is stated in his report. Longstreet

was directed to make an attack upon the enemy's left. Ewell was to attack the high ground to his right, while Hill was to threaten the Federal centre to prevent the sending reinforcements to either wing.*

All night of the 1st Hancock's corps was marching for Gettysburg, where it arrived next morning about seven o'clock, and was posted along Cemetery Ridge. Two brigades of Birney's arrived that evening, and two brigades of Humphreys's next morning. The Fifth Corps marched twenty-three miles, and reached the ground about eight o'clock A. M., when it was posted on the Federal right above Rock Creek. The Sixth Corps marched thirty-four miles, from Manchester, arriving only on the afternoon of the 2d.

On the 2d, Longstreet's Corps, except Law's Brigade, reached the immediate vicinity of the battle-field early in the morning. Kershaw bivouacked two miles from Gettysburg the night before, and was ordered to move at four o'clock in the morning. McLaws had reached the field at nine o'clock, and Lee, in Longstreet's presence, personally pointed out to him on the map the road where he was to place his division. He reports that Lee rejected a suggestion of Long-

* Lee's report. See Appendix C.

street's, and that the latter appeared irritated. From this time until after three o'clock, Lee was eagerly awaiting the movement by Longstreet which he had ordered, and which was to begin the battle. It was not, however, until four o'clock that Hood moved forward to the attack against Sickles's left, which was bent back toward Roundtop. McLaws, opposite Sickles's centre, posted on high ground formed by an outbranching elevation nearly a mile in advance of the Federal left, was still held back "awaiting Longstreet's orders." In a brief time the fighting was as furious as any that occurred on that deadly field. Hood, pushing in beyond Sickles's left, sent his right to seize first Big and then Little Roundtop, which up to this hour had not been occupied by the Federals. But at this juncture—only a few minutes before Hood's men (Law's Alabamians) reached the top of that rocky spur—the Federals appeared in force on the summit, and again the chance of victory was snatched from Lee. General Warren, who had been sent by Sickles a little while before to reconnoitre that part of the field, had ridden up Roundtop and caught sight of Hood's men moving forward on that position. Realizing the importance of the position, he had dashed back, and finding

Vincent's brigade being pushed forward to Sickles's aid, he had turned and directed them up Little Roundtop, which they reached just in time to hold against Law's Alabamians, who were clambering up the side. In the first shock the gallant Vincent was mortally wounded. Driven down the steep spur, Law's Brigade reformed at its foot, and, reinforced by Robertson's Texans and Bennings's Georgians, who had seized the Devil's Den and driven in Sickles's left, again charged up, driving Vincent's men back to the Top; but at this moment Federal reinforcements sent by Warren arrived, and Hood's men were once more driven down the steep, and Weed's brigade was sent with artillery to help hold what was now recognized as the key to the situation. "During all this time," says Alexander, "McLaws's Division was standing idle," though Barksdale was begging to be allowed to charge, and McLaws was awaiting Longstreet's order. Even when it was advanced it was in detachments, which sacrificed brigade after brigade. Kershaw, Semmes, Wofford, and Barksdale, Wilcox, Lang, and Wright fought brilliantly, but in turn rather than in concert, attacking Sickles along his left and centre. At length, Hood, on the extreme right, McLaws

next to him, and Anderson, on the left, after furious fighting drove Sickles from the peach-orchard, across the wheat-field, and drove them finally, with terrific losses to both sides, to the high ground along Cemetery Ridge, christening the ground which Pickett was to make glorious next day.* The Fifth Corps, however, was now in position, and the Sixth Corps was arriving, and being put in to the north of Roundtop, was sent forward to support the hard-pressed Third Corps, which was being driven across the wheat-field. Further to the Confederate left, while Anderson was supporting McLaws with Wilcox alone, while Mahone and Posey were held back, Hill attacked the Federal centre with but two brigades—Wright's Georgia Brigade and Perry's Florida Brigade under Lang. In a splendid charge across the open valley and up the bare slope under a withering fire of bullet, shot, and shell they advanced for over three-quarters of a mile, drove the enemy from their first line and carried the Ridge, capturing a number of the guns with which it was crowned. But here they found the enemy in a second line beyond their guns, and with their flanks exposed to a destructive fire of canister from either side, they were

* Alexander's "Memoirs," pp. 394–403.

forced back with terrible losses, thus losing for want of support what Pickett vainly tried to capture next day. Wright declared that he could have held the Ridge had he been supported. None of these new troops on the Federal side were on the ground before five o'clock, and it cost 10,000 men to gain but a small part of what might have been seized with comparatively little cost had Lee's orders been carried out in the forenoon, when only the Second Corps and one division of the Third Corps were on the Ridge south of Cemetery Hill.

Ewell had waited all morning for the signal of Longstreet's and Hill's guns to begin his assault on the Federal right, on Cemetery Hill, and on the eastern spur of Culp's Hill, both of which were well fortified and defended with abundant artillery to protect them. Owing probably to the deadly fire from the batteries crowning the hills, Ewell's attack was delayed until nearly sunset. Early was to attack Cemetery Hill with Hoke's and Hays's Brigades, and Edward Johnson, to his left, was to assault Culp's Hill. Under a withering fire Hays's Brigade carried Cemetery Ridge, but was forced back again by Hancock's reinforcement of the Eleventh Corps and the failure of his own supporting columns

to come up on his right till he was driven back. It was not until after Early had been driven back with terrific losses that Johnson's Division, to the left, moved on the enemy's right on Culp's Hill. Johnson, after heavy fighting, carried the enemy's breastworks, which he held until next morning, when he was driven from them by the Twelfth Corps, reinforced by portions of the Fifth and Sixth Corps. The whole battle was without concert.

Yet Lee, at the close of the day, had made decided gains. He had driven Sickles from his chosen position to the ridge behind it; had effected a lodgement in the Devil's Den near the foot of the Roundtops, and on the enemy's right held their fortifications on Culp's Hill. He had suffered terribly himself, but had inflicted on them losses of 10,000 men, and he had received the reinforcement of Pickett's Division and of Stuart's Cavalry. Lee's own view was that "the result of the day's operation induced the belief that, with proper concert of action and with the increased support that the position gained on the right would enable the artillery to render the assaulting column," he had good grounds to count on success.* Accordingly, that

* Lee's report. *Cf.* Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee"; General Humphreys' "Gettysburg Campaign."

night at a council of war he determined to continue the attack, and gave orders for the assault next morning.

Stuart having, as stated, crossed the Potomac to the eastward of Hooker, did not learn of the changed status of affairs, and of Lee's concentration of his army about Gettysburg, until he reached Carlisle, well to the north of Gettysburg, which he had passed around on his way toward the Susquehanna. He then turned and made for Gettysburg, where he arrived on the afternoon of the second day. It was said by men who were present when Stuart met Lee, that the latter exclaimed with more feeling than he usually allowed himself to manifest: "General Stuart, where have you been?" and when Stuart explained, and mentioned his capture of over two hundred wagons, that Lee exclaimed: "Two hundred wagons! General Stuart, what are two hundred wagons to this army!" Then, immediately recovering himself, the commanding general proceeded to give his lieutenant orders as to the disposition of his force. This disposition sent him around the left to strike the enemy's rear, where he was engaged heavily with Gregg and Custer, without material results. On the 3d, to quote Lee's report, "the general plan was unchanged. Longstreet, reinforced by Pickett's

three brigades, which arrived near the battlefield during the afternoon of the 2d, was ordered to attack the next morning, and General Ewell was directed to assault the enemy's right at the same time."*

But on the 3d, as before, the movement against the centre was delayed for hours, and when finally it was carried out, there was again a failure of the support which alone could bring success. Johnson, isolated on the extreme left, was attacked at daylight and driven from the position he had captured the evening before, and after he had charged again and been repulsed with great loss, this ended the fighting for the day on that part of the field.

To the right the morning wore away and noon came and passed without the expected assault. Every hour was spent by Meade in strengthening his lines and preparing for the coming storm.

It was nearly two o'clock when the guns of the Confederate artillery, about 125 in number, along the Seminary Ridge, which were to begin the fight and prepare the way for the infantry to charge the Federal lines, intrenched on the Cemetery Ridge, nearly a mile away, opened fire on them. They were promptly replied to by

* Lee's report.

the guns, about 100 in all, but of superior calibre and force, ranged along the Federal lines.

It is said that no such cannonading as this had ever been known on the continent. The Federal batteries presently slackened, as proved later, merely to substitute fresh battalions, and Alexander, in charge of Lee's advance artillery, sent an urgent message to Longstreet that his ammunition was nearly exhausted, and on Longstreet's saying that he had better replenish it, replied that there was none with which to replenish. Then finally Longstreet ordered his leading division forward, and in all the annals of war there is no more heroic record than that of that steady march across the open plain, with the Federal army posted on the ridge above it raining death upon them from 100 guns and 50,000 muskets.

Lee says nothing of the hour set for the attack; but according to overwhelming authority it was to be made in the early morning by a column composed of McLaws's and Hood's Divisions, reinforced by Pickett's Brigades.* Ewell says "at daylight Friday morning, and that Johnson was engaged when he was informed that Longstreet would not be ready till ten."† But when

* Lee's report.

† Ewell's report.

Longstreet, hours later, unwillingly gave his order to Pickett to advance in the charge which has made Pickett's Division glorious, curiously enough McLaws and Hood were not sent forward in support, and these two fine divisions were left where they were awaiting orders, and the first knowledge they had was that the assault had been made and had failed.*

Heth's Division under Pettigrew—who commanded since Heth's disablement by a serious wound the day before—was formed in two lines on Pickett's left, with a space of several hundred yards between the two, and two brigades of Pender's Division, under Trimble, were formed in the rear and in supporting distance of Pettigrew. Wilcox's Brigade, from Anderson's Division, was ordered to move on Pickett's right flank as a protection to that flank. In all, about 14,000 or 15,000 men against 70,000, posted in one of the strongest positions found during the war. It was a tragic situation.

With ranks dressed on their colors and bands playing as if on parade, the gray line marched down the slope, across the level, and then up the long slope before them, and all the while the gaps were being torn wider and wider in their

* Longstreet's account of the battle.

ranks by the sleet of iron from a hundred guns, trained on them from front and flanks.

It transpired later that a part of the Confederate artillery had not done great damage, having failed to get the range. One battery of Nelson's Battalion, however (Milledge's), posted on a ridge to the north-east of Cemetery Hill, struck the range and did much execution with its rifled guns, enfilading the Eleventh Corps, till Nelson was ordered to withdraw.* No better description of what followed can be written than that contained in Colonel David Gregg McIntosh's "Review of the Gettysburg Campaign." The author was himself not only a "beholder," but one of the most gallant participants in that fatal battle.

"When Pickett and the other divisions emerged from cover and advanced to the open, they presented a thrilling spectacle, and one which no beholder can ever forget. The ranks were beautifully dressed, and the battle-flags told off the different commands. . . .

"As the lines advanced, and the batteries of the enemy again opened, and the gaps in the ranks began to grow wider and then to shrivel and shrink up beneath the deadly, withering fire

* Alexander's "Memoirs," pp. 418, 427.

of the infantry, and the stream of the wounded began to pour back in increasing volume, the hearts of those who were spectators were filled at first with a deep hush of expectancy, and then with a feeling of agonized despair, when the goal seemed to be reached and, hanging suspended a moment, the tide rolled backward broken into fragments, and the brave fellows who a half hour before marched so valiantly up to the cannon's mouth, now lay prostrate on the green slopes, or else came limping back, battered and bleeding. There is no need for repetition of the details. The monuments on the ground attest the desperate valor with which each side fought."

As the broken ranks came back across the shot-ploughed plain, Lee advanced to meet them. "This is too bad! too bad!" he exclaimed. "It is all my fault." And then to the men as they passed him he said: "Go down to the stream and refresh yourselves." The next moment he was ordering up troops to meet any counterstroke which Meade might attempt. But Meade, like himself, was spent. Valor may be infinite, but endurance has its limitations.

The battle of Gettysburg has continued to be fought over from that day to the present, and will doubtless continue to be fought over for many

years to come. To one, however, who has endeavored to study carefully and dispassionately both sides of the controversy which has grown out of this battle, it appears that Lee had good reason to believe that he would win it; that he ought to have won it on the first day, and on the second, even against Meade's masterly generalship; but that on the third day his chances were incalculably diminished. Whatever may be thought as to this, the opinion of the future is likely to be that on the part of Lee's corps commanders it was the worst-fought battle of the war. With a plan that gave every promise of success, and that ought to have succeeded—with valor never surpassed on any field, valor on both sides so heroic and so splendid as to be almost incredible—the corps commanders, not once, but again and again, by their failure to carry out the plan of their chief in the spirit in which it was conceived, threw away every chance of victory and left the honors of all but valor to the Union general.

It used to be common soon after the war for old Confederate officers to declare that Longstreet should have been shot immediately after the battle, and that Napoleon would certainly have done so. But Lee was cast in a different

mould. Of all his army he possibly knew most fully how absolutely Longstreet had frustrated his plans, and certainly of all he treated him with most leniency. No hint of his subordinate's failure or delay appears in his report, and to the day of his death he wrote his old lieutenant letters full of warm regard. But while he was assuming the burden of the responsibility and wrote Longstreet the affectionate letters of an old brother-in-arms who knew his worth, and overlooked his errors, Longstreet, with what was not far from sheer ingratitude, was placing on Lee the blame for his own shortcomings, and was arrogantly claiming that had he been allowed to dictate the plan of the campaign, the result would have been success.

Longstreet's fatal delay has been attributed to the time it required to find and follow a route to Sickles's left flank without being observed. General E. P. Alexander, his chief of artillery, admits his unaccountable slowness. But a better reason may be found in his own account of his action. After General Lee was in his honored grave, Longstreet published his own defence, in which, evidently angered by Lee's reported speech that Longstreet was "so slow," he undertook to prove that Lee had made eleven grave

errors in the precipitation and conduct of the battle of Gettysburg. He says that he opposed fighting the battle of Gettysburg, and that when he, on the evening of the 1st, gave his opinion to General Lee that they could not have called the enemy to a position better suited to their plans, and that all they had to do was to file around his left and secure good ground between him and his capital, he was astonished at Lee's impatience and his vehement declaration: "If he is there to-morrow I will attack him," and thereupon he observes: "His desperate mood was painfully evident and gave rise to serious apprehensions." All of which was written long afterward and as a defence against the quite general and serious criticism of his own conduct as the cause of Lee's failure.

But why, it has been asked, should Lee have been in a desperate mood? He had an army on which he knew he could count to do anything if they were properly led. He had gone into the North to fight; he had just seen a part of his force roll two fine army corps, fighting furiously, back through the town and over the heights, in confusion, leaving in his hands 5,000 captives, and he knew that the bulk of the Federal army was from four to nine times as far from the field as his

own corps. His reason for fighting next morning was, therefore, not his desperation, but his apparently well-grounded hope that he should win a battle before Meade could concentrate, and then be in a position to force terms. His position has commended itself to clear-headed soldiers since,* and the criticism of it is retroactive and based on events which should not, and in all human probability would not, have occurred but for Longstreet's slowness if not his bull-headedness.

Lee, as he waited on the morning of the 2d for Longstreet to move forward, gave Hood, who had been on the ground since daybreak, his chief reason for fighting. "The enemy is here," he said, "and if we don't whip him he will whip us." It was a sound reason and has been approved by good critics, and had Longstreet not dallied or sulked for more than half the day it might have been justified before dark fell on the night of the 2d of July. With Meade's army concentrated in his front, Lee could not retire through the passes of the South Mountain, and he could not manœuvre without abandoning his lines of communication; for without his cavalry

* Lieutenant-Colonel G. F. R. Henderson's Review of Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox." (*Journal of Royal United Service Inst.*, October, 1897.)

he could get no supplies. As we see Longstreet fooling away the hours while spade and shovel rang along the green crest piling up the earthworks, and while Sedgwick's Sixth Corps, hot-footed, pushed along the dusty roads telling off the long miles hour after hour, we may well understand how different would have been the result had but Stonewall Jackson commanded that day the bronzed and eager divisions lying all morning with stacked arms awaiting orders. Doubtless it was this that was in Lee's mind when, long afterward, he said: "If I had had Jackson at Gettysburg, as far as human reason can see, I should have won a great victory."

On July 3, when Lee assaulted he was repulsed in what is known to soldiers as the third day's battle; but his defeat was accomplished in the first half of the preceding day, when Longstreet failed to carry out his orders and the golden opportunity was lost.

To show that on this third day it was Longstreet's slowness which destroyed finally all possibility of success, cannot be better done than by quoting from the illuminating review of his book by Lieutenant-Colonel, afterward Brigadier-General, G. F. R. Henderson, already so closely followed.

High tide at Gettysburg.

From a drawing by C. S. Reinhart.

"His conduct on the third day," declares this critic, "opens up a still graver issue. The First Army Corps when at length, on the afternoon of July 2, it was permitted to attack had achieved a distinct success. The enemy was driven back to his main position with enormous loss. On the morning of July 3, Lee determined to assault that position, in front and flank, simultaneously, and, according to his chief of the staff, Longstreet's Corps was to make the main attack on the centre, while the Second Corps attacked the right. But again there was delay, and this time it was fatal. . . . We may note that according to Longstreet's own testimony the order [to attack] was given soon after sunrise, and yet, although the Second Corps attacking the Federal right became engaged at daylight, it was not until 1 P. M., eight hours later, that the artillery of the First Corps opened fire, and not till 2 P. M. that the infantry advanced. Their assault was absolutely isolated. The Second Corps had already been beaten back. The Third Corps, although a division who were ready to move to any point to which Longstreet might indicate, was not called upon for assistance. Two divisions of his own corps, posted on the right flank, did absolutely nothing, and after a supremely gallant effort the 15,000 men who were

hurled against the front of the Federal army, and some of whom actually penetrated the position, were repulsed with fearful slaughter."

After discussing in detail Longstreet's tactics and action, this thoughtful critic adds: "But the crucial question is this: *Why did he delay his attack for eight hours,* during which time the Second Corps with which he was to co-operate was heavily engaged? If he moved only under compulsion, if he deliberately forbore to use his best efforts to carry out Lee's design, and to compel him to adopt his own, the case is very different. That he did so seems perfectly clear." "If Lee was to blame at all in the Gettysburg campaign," adds Henderson, "it was in taking as his second in command a general who was so completely indifferent to the claim of discipline."

Had Lee's orders been obeyed, he would probably have won the battle of Gettysburg. He must have won it on the 2d of July, when he had "a fine opportunity of dealing with the enemy in detail"; he might have won it even on the 3d, though his chances of doing so were greatly diminished. But fate, that decides the issues of nations, decreed otherwise. The crown of Cemetery Ridge, seized and held for twenty minutes by that devoted band of gray-clad heroes, marks

the highest tide, not of Confederate valor, but of Confederate hope. Even so, it appeared at first but a drawn battle. The Army of Northern Virginia had struck Meade so terrible a blow that, as Halleck testified before the commission on the conduct of the war, a council of war was held on the night of the 4th to decide whether they should retreat. At this council Meade asked his corps commanders three momentous questions: First, "Shall the army remain here?" Second, "If we remain here, shall we assume the offensive?" And then, third, "By what route shall we follow Lee?" The majority of voices were for remaining there; but unanimously they were against assuming the offensive. All that day the two armies lay on the opposite hills like spent lions nursing their wounds, neither of them able to attack the other. Next day Lee, with ammunition-chests nearly exhausted, fell slowly back to the Potomac, cautiously followed by his antagonist, and after waiting quietly for its swollen waters to subside, recrossed into Virginia. It was a defeat, for Lee had failed of his purpose. But it was a defeat which barely touches his fame as a captain. No other captain or army in history might have done more. No other ever conducted a more masterly retreat when the fight ended in failure.

It was possibly apparent to most trained soldiers when the remnants of the gray line that had climbed the long slopes of Gettysburg under the deadly sleet that poured down on them, came back, that the battle was lost, and the Southern cause had received a staggering shock. None could have known it so well as Lee, and later he wrote his wife that she must not place too much reliance on the newspaper accounts of the Southern success. But he gave no sign of defeat. When young Colonel Pendleton, who had been Jackson's adjutant-general, and was still adjutant-general of the Second Corps, took him, on the 4th, the casualty list of his corps, and thinking to be encouraging, remarked that he hoped that the other two corps were in as good condition for work as the Second was that morning, Lee looked at him steadily and said coldly: "What reason have you, young gentleman, to suppose that they are not?"

During the 4th he had begun to send back his trains, his wounded and his prisoners, under a cavalry escort, taking the direct road for Williamsport by Fairfield, and on the night of the 4th he began to withdraw his army. Owing, however, to the storm and the condition of the roads, it was not till the afternoon of the 5th that Ewell's command, composing his rear guard, left its

position in front of Meade. Next day Meade, urged on from Washington, began his pursuit, if that could be termed a pursuit, which took a roundabout course by Frederick and Middletown, and did not bring him to the Potomac until Lee had been waiting there for six days. Within sixty hours, Lee was at Hagerstown, posted to receive any assault which Meade might deliver. Then, as the assault was not made, he moved on. On the 13th he was at Williamsport, where, finding the river in flood, he took a position, which he fortified in such a manner as to cover his position all the way to Falling Waters, and again prepared for battle, and awaited Meade's attack. Then, to quote his own words, as the river was likely to rise higher, and Meade "exhibited an intention of fortifying so as to hold a small force in our front, while they operated elsewhere," Lee concluded to recross to the Virginia side. This he accomplished on the afternoon and night of Monday, the 13th, and the morning of Tuesday, the 14th.*

As Lee lay near Williamsport, waiting for the Potomac River to subside, he gave an exhibition of his constancy. He heard here of the capt-

* "Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, D.D.," pp. 295, 296. E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 441.

ure by Kilpatrick, in a raid, of his son, General W. H. F. Lee, who had been seriously wounded, and was ill at the home of his wife's uncle, Mr. William F. Wickham, in Hanover County. "I have heard with great grief," he writes his wife, "that Fitzhugh has been captured by the enemy. Had not expected that he would have been taken from his bed and carried off, but we must bear this additional affliction with fortitude and resignation and not repine at the will of God. It will eventuate in some good that we know not of now. We must all bear our labors and hardships manfully. Our noble men are cheerful and confident. I constantly remember you in my thoughts and prayers."

To Mr. Davis he writes, on the 8th, of his army: "Though reduced in numbers by the hardships and battles through which it has passed since leaving the Rappahannock, its condition is good, and its confidence is unimpaired. I hope your Excellency will understand that I am not in the least discouraged, or that my faith in the protection of an all-merciful Providence, or in the fortitude of this army, is at all shaken."

When was that constant soul ever shaken! God had established it beyond the power of adversity to touch, much less to shake, it. On July

12, lying between Meade's great army and the swollen river, he writes his wife: "You will learn before this reaches you, that our success at Gettysburg was not so great as reported. In fact, that we failed to drive the enemy from his position, and that our army withdrew to the Potomac. Had the river not unexpectedly risen, all would have been well with us; but God in His all-wise providence willed otherwise, and our communications have been interrupted and almost cut off. The waters have subsided to about four feet, and if they continue, by to-morrow I hope our communications will be open. I trust that a merciful God, our only hope and refuge, will not desert us in this hour of need, and will deliver us by His almighty hand, that the whole world may recognize His power, and all hearts be lifted up in adoration and praise of His unbounded loving-kindness. We must, however, submit to His almighty will, whatever that may be. May God guide and protect us all is my constant prayer."

Surely no defeated general, with his army lying where, humanly speaking, every chance was against them, ever exhibited a humbler heart to God or presented a more constant front to his enemy. Meade, though heavily reinforced, could

not see his way clear to assault a foe so bold and perilous even in retreat, and called a council of war, at which the decision reached was not to attack. And, indeed, Lee's position was almost impregnable.* The insistence of the government in Washington, however, was so great, and Halleck's despatch to Meade was so close akin to a censure, that he instantly requested to be relieved, which drew from Halleck something like an apology. The next day, spurred on by the reflection of his superiors in Washington, he made his dispositions to attack; but the day before Lee had begun to cross the river, and by one o'clock on the 14th his rear guard, composed of Hill's command, was over, leaving to the enemy, as the spoils of the rear-guard battle fought by Hill's Division, 2 guns, a number of wagons abandoned for want of horses, and some 500 men, including stragglers from various commands, "overcome by previous labors and hardships, and fatigues of a most trying night." Such was Lee's account.

Before leaving the subject of Gettysburg, it may prove illuminating, even at the cost of some repetition, to know what Lee himself said on the subject of this campaign. His formal statement is contained in his report to his government,

* Humphreys' "Gettysburg Campaign."

nearly a month later.* He gives in outline not only his movements, but his reasons, and in them we have the picture of the man. No word of censure appears. It is a simple and lucid statement of the essential facts, and testifies to a serene and constant mind. The responsibility he assumed fully and unequivocally. His reference to Longstreet conveys a commendation, in that he linked his name with the capture of "the desired ground" on the second day.†

On his return to Virginia, Lee wrote to his wife letters which gave his views on the situation:

BUNKER HILL, VA., *July* 15*th.*

The army has returned to Virginia. Its return is rather sooner than I had originally contemplated, but having accomplished much of what I proposed on leaving the Rappahannock—namely, relieving the valley of the presence of the enemy and drawing his army north of the Potomac—I determined to recross the latter river. The enemy, after concentrating his forces in our front, began to fortify himself in his position, and bring up his troops, militia, etc., and those around Washington and Alexandria. This gave him enormous odds. It also circumscribed our limits for procuring subsistence for men and animals, which, with the un-

* See Appendix C. † *Ibid.*

certain state of the river, rendered it hazardous for us to continue on the north side. It has been raining a great deal since we first crossed the Potomac, making the roads horrid and embarrassing our operations. The night we recrossed it rained terribly; yet we got all over safe, save such vehicles as broke down on the road from the mud, rocks, etc. We are all well. I hope we will yet be able to damage our adversaries when they meet us, and that all will go right with us. That it should be so we must implore the forgiveness of God for our sins and the continuance of His blessings. There is nothing but His almighty power that can sustain us. God bless you all.

CAMP CULPEPER, VA., *July* 26, 1863.

After crossing the Potomac, finding that the Shenandoah was six feet above fording stage, and having waited a week for it to fall so that I might cross into Loudoun, fearing that the enemy might take advantage of our position and move upon Richmond, I determined to ascend the valley and cross into Culpeper. Two corps are here with me. The third passed Thornton's Gap, and, I hope, will be in striking distance to-morrow. The army has labored hard, endured much, and behaved nobly. It has accomplished all that could be reasonably expected. It ought not to have been expected to perform impossibilities or to have fulfilled the anticipations of the thoughtless and unreasonable.

The numbers of the respective armies on the field were: Meade's troops, 105,000; Lee's troops, 62,000. The losses during the three days were: Meade's losses, 23,000—killed, wounded, and missing; Lee's losses, 20,500—killed, wounded, and missing. In the Army of the Potomac 4 general officers were killed and 13 were wounded. In the Army of Northern Virginia 5 general officers were killed and 9 were wounded. It is a roll of honor.

Three or four cardinal mistakes united to cause Lee's defeat at Gettysburg. The first was Stuart's failure to keep him apprised of Hooker's movements, by which he ran into the Federal army in a situation where he had either to fight and whip it or be whipped by it. The second was Ewell's failure to pursue the advantage he had gained on the afternoon of the 1st and seize Cemetery Ridge, instead of halting his troops below it and giving Meade time to occupy and fortify it. The third was Longstreet's failure to attack, on the morning of the 2d, before Meade's whole army was up. And the fourth was Longstreet's failure to carry out his orders and attack in concert on the morning of the 3d, instead of throwing away the entire forenoon and then sending Pickett and Heth alone up the long open slopes of Gettys-

burg, with the whole Federal army to play on them as they advanced.

Had Stuart operated between Lee and Hooker's army, as he was expected to do, Lee might have chosen his own battle-ground and have awaited attack as he did at Sharpsburg. The absence of Stuart on his raid, Steel thinks, possibly cost Lee a victory. But even after Gettysburg had become the battle-ground, Lee's plan was sound enough had his corps commanders not hesitated and delayed the execution of their respective parts. Valor could do no more than was done. On both sides it reached its high tide of self-devotion and immolation. But the intelligence which should have directed this valor on the Southern side suddenly fell into abeyance, and the opportunities which fortune offered were allowed to pass unheeded with the passing hours. Indeed, the judgment of the future is likely to be, that while on the Northern side the corps commanders made amends for lack of plan and saved the day by their admirable co-operation, on the Southern side the plan of the commanding general was defeated by the failure of the corps commanders to act promptly and in concert. Lee's declaration that had he had Jackson at Gettysburg, he would, so far as man could see, have won the

battle, is to this effect. The prompt and high-minded Meade was a little later superseded by his government in favor of the victorious Grant, and loyally served under him as commander of the Army of the Potomac to the end. His government thought he should have destroyed Lee's army. The truth is that Lee's army was indestructible by any force that Meade could have brought against it. But, at the South, neither Lee nor his heroic army ever stood higher with the authorities or the Southern people. His very defeat seems even now but the pedestal for a more exalted heroism. With a magnanimity too sublime for common men wholly to appreciate, he took all the blame for the failure on himself. History has traversed his unselfish statement, and has placed the blame where it justly belongs: on those who failed to carry out the plan his daring genius had conceived.

Moved possibly by the criticism of the opposition press, for there was ever a hostile and intractable press attacking the government of the Confederacy and reviling all its works, Lee a little later wrote to Mr. Davis and proposed that he should be relieved by some younger and possibly more efficient man. His bodily strength was failing, he said, and he was dependent on

the eyes of others. Mr. Davis promptly reassured him in a letter which goes far to explain the personal loyalty to him, not only of Lee, but of the South.

These letters give a picture of the two men in their relation to each other, and to the cause they represented, and should be read in full by all who would understand the character of the two leaders of the Confederacy.

Lee's letter was as follows:

CAMP ORANGE, *August* 8, 1863.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Your letters of the 28th of July and 2d of August have been received, and I have waited for a leisure hour to reply, but I fear that will never come. I am extremely obliged to you for the attention given to the wants of this army and the efforts made to supply them. Our absentees are returning, and I hope the earnest and beautiful appeal made to the country in your proclamation may stir up the whole people, and that they may see their duty and perform it. Nothing is wanted but that their fortitude should equal their bravery to insure the success of our cause. We must expect reverses, even defeats. They are sent to teach us wisdom and prudence, to call forth greater energies, and to prevent our falling into greater disasters. Our people have only to be true and united, to bear manfully the misfortunes

incident to war, and all will come right in the end. I know how prone we are to censure, and how ready to blame others for the non-fulfilment of our expectations. This is unbecoming in a generous people, and I grieve at its expression. The general remedy for the want of success in a military commander is his removal. This is natural, and in many instances proper; for no matter what may be the ability of the officer, if he loses the confidence of his troops, disaster must sooner or later ensue.

I have been prompted by these reflections more than once since my return from Pennsylvania to propose to your Excellency the propriety of selecting another commander for this army. I have seen and heard of expressions of discontent in the public journals as the result of the expedition. I do not know how far this feeling extends to the army. My brother officers have been too kind to report it, and so far the troops have been too generous to exhibit it. It is fair, however, to suppose that it does exist, and success is so necessary to us that nothing should be left undone to secure it. I, therefore, in all sincerity, request your Excellency to take measures to supply my place. I do this with the more earnestness because no one is more aware than myself of my inability to discharge the duties of my position. I cannot even accomplish what I myself desire. How can I fulfil the expectations of others? In addition, I sensibly feel the growing failure of my bodily

strength. I have not yet recovered from the attack I experienced the past spring. I am becoming more and more incapable of exertion, and am thus prevented from making the personal examination and giving the supervision to the operations in the field which I feel to be necessary. I am so dull that, in undertaking to use the eyes of others, I am frequently misled.

Everything, therefore, points to the advantage to be derived from a new commander, and I the more anxiously urge the matter upon your Excellency from my belief that a younger and abler man than myself can be readily obtained. I know that he will have as gallant and brave an army as ever existed to second his efforts, and it would be the happiest day of my life to see at its head a worthy leader—one that would accomplish more than I can perform, and all that I have wished. I hope your Excellency will attribute my request to the true reason—the desire to serve my country and to do all in my power to insure the success of her righteous cause.

I have no complaints to make of any one but myself. I have received nothing but kindness from those above me, and the most considerate attention from my comrades and companions in arms. To your Excellency I am specially indebted for uniform kindness and consideration. You have done everything in your power to aid me in the work committed to my charge, without omitting anything to promote the general welfare.

I pray that your efforts may at length be crowned with success, and that you may long live to enjoy the thanks of a grateful people.

With sentiments of great esteem, I am,

Very respectfully and truly yours,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

His Excellency, Jefferson Davis, *President Confederate States.*

To this letter President Davis sent the following reply:

Richmond, Va., *August* 11, 1863.

General R. E. Lee,

*Commanding Army of Northern Virginia.*

Yours of the 8th inst. has just been received. I am glad that you concur so entirely with me as to the wants of our country in this trying hour, and am happy to add that after the first depression consequent upon our disasters in the West, indications have appeared that our people will exhibit that fortitude which we agree in believing is alone needed to secure ultimate success.

It well became Sidney Johnston when overwhelmed by a senseless clamor to admit the rule that success is the test of merit; and yet there has been nothing which I have found to require a greater effort of patience than to bear the criticisms of the ignorant who pronounce everything a failure which does not equal their expectations or desires, and can see no good result which is not in the line of their own imaginings.

I admit the propriety of your conclusions that an officer who loses the confidence of his troops should have his position changed, whatever may be his ability; but when I read the sentence I was not at all prepared for the application you were about to make. Expressions of discontent in the public journals furnish but little evidence of the sentiment of the army. I wish it were otherwise, even though all the abuse of myself should be accepted as the results of honest observation. Were you capable of stooping to it, you could easily surround yourself with those who would fill the press with your laudations, and seek to exalt you for what you had not done, rather than detract from the achievements which will make you and your army the subject of history and the object of the world's admiration for generations to come.

I am truly sorry to know that you still feel the effects of the illness you suffered last spring, and can readily understand the embarrassments you experience in using the eyes of others, having been so much accustomed to make your own reconnoissances. Practice will, however, do much to relieve that embarrassment, and the minute knowledge of the country which you have acquired will render you less dependent for topographical information.

But suppose, my dear friend, that I were to admit, with all their implications, the points which you present, where am I to find the new commander who is to possess the greater ability which

you believe to be required? I do not doubt the readiness with which you would give way to one who could accomplish all that you have wished, and you will do me the justice to believe that if Providence should kindly offer such a person for our use I would not hesitate to avail myself of his services.

My sight is not sufficiently penetrating to discover such hidden merit, if it exists, and I have but used to you the language of sober earnestness when I have impressed upon you the propriety of avoiding all unnecessary exposure to danger, because I felt our country could not bear to lose you. To ask me to substitute for you some one, in my judgment, more fit to command or who would possess more of the confidence of the army, or of the reflecting men of the country, is to demand an impossibility. It only remains for me to hope that you will take all possible care of yourself, that your health and strength will be entirely restored, and that the Lord will preserve you for the important duties devolved upon you in the struggle of our suffering country for the independence which we have engaged in war to maintain.

As ever,

Very respectfully and truly,

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

With these letters to portray the character of Lee, history will endorse with its infallible pen

what the President of the Confederacy wrote: There was no better man to take his place.

Though Lee failed of final success, to the student of history who weighs opportunities and compares resources, this in nowise mars his fame. With ammunition almost exhausted, he lay in the face of the enemy twenty-four hours, and then, with Meade's great army pressing him, urged on by the now eager government and people of the Union, he marched slowly to the Potomac, which was in flood, and after lying ten days in the face of his antagonist, with the swollen Potomac at his back, brought off his army intact and undispirited, together with 4,000 prisoners, and having recrossed the Potomac on the 13th and 14th, and moved back to his old ground about Culpeper, he proceeded to prepare for the next campaign.

The chief disaster of Gettysburg lay not so much in the first repulse of the intrepid lines, which, in the face of a constantly increasing storm of shot and shell, swept across that deadly plain and on up the flaming slopes of Cemetery Ridge and Little Roundtop, as in the consequences which were soon disclosed.

## XIV

### AUTUMN OF 1863

ON finding that Lee had succeeded in crossing the Potomac, Gregg's cavalry undertook to cross the river; but two of Stuart's Brigades fell on him and drove him back to his own side with heavy loss. Lee having, a little later, moved up the valley of the Shenandoah, with a view of crossing the Blue Ridge into Loudoun, not only found the Shenandoah too high for fording, but that Meade, who had crossed the Potomac lower down, had seized and fortified the passes of the Blue Ridge. He accordingly marched on and crossed over by way of Chester Gap into Culpeper, where he posted himself on the Rapidan to prevent Meade's marching on Richmond, which was now uncovered.

Meade was now by reason of his magnitude and the spirit of his troops formidable enough to require careful watching. It has been frequently remarked that Lee after Gettysburg made no further attempt to invade the country of the enemy. The fact is correct, but the reason given for it is mainly erroneous. The true

reason was that his army had no shoes nor clothes. It was said by Napoleon that an army marches on its belly; and it has been said with equal truth that while it can fight without shoes, it cannot march without them. Shoes were now more difficult to get in the Confederacy than guns. The need of clothes and shoes precipitated the battle of Gettysburg. The same want now effected what Meade with his great and gallant army could not have done—it held Lee within a circumscribed field of operations. He could no longer lead his eager veterans to distant fields and exercise his masterly strategy. The Southwest was almost as completely cut off by the capture of Vicksburg and the opening of the Mississippi as was Canada, and what the opened Mississippi failed to accomplish in this respect, the steadily dwindling lines to the south completed. The South was, indeed, entering on its final period of exhaustion.

Lee, having marched around Meade to Culpeper, now established his army in the well-known region among the head-waters of the Rappahannock and Rapidan, where his position was convenient for covering the railroad at the same time that he could observe Meade and be ready to take advantage of any misstep he might

make. Here he spent the remainder of the summer endeavoring to get his army refitted with shoes and clothing necessary to resume the offensive. Another reason for his remaining inactive during this period was that owing to the exigency in the South-west, where affairs were not going well, Longstreet was detached and sent out to Tennessee with two of his divisions, those of McLaws and Hood, to reinforce Bragg and defeat Rosecrans at Chickamauga, while Pickett's Division was detached for service below Petersburg, where Richmond was threatened from Norfolk and Suffolk. Longstreet was urgent to go, and when Lee, from Richmond, where he had been summoned by Mr. Davis for consultation, wrote him in August, urging him to "use every exertion to prepare the army for offensive operations," so as to bring General Meade out in the open field and crush his army, Longstreet wrote combating Lee's suggestions, and gave his opinion that the "best opportunity for great results is in Tennessee."

As the summer passed and Meade learned of the diminution of Lee's forces by the detachment of Longstreet, who had been sent to Tennessee, he began to conceive hopes of being able to force him back on Richmond. On September 4, Lee

wrote his wife from camp, near Orange Court House: "You see I am still here. When I last wrote, the indications were that the enemy would move against us any day; but this past week he has been very quiet, and seems at present to continue so. I was out looking at him yesterday from Clark's Mountain. He has spread himself over a large surface and looks immense; but I hope will not prove as formidable as he looks." Lee was now on the alert to bar Meade's way, whichever direction he might take, and after waiting three weeks for Meade to take the steps he had apparently been contemplating, Lee followed his natural instinct and assumed the offensive. On October 9, leaving a force of cavalry and infantry to guard his old position, he began a flank movement around Meade's right, which was substantially a repetition of the manœuvre that had hurried Pope across the Rappahannock over a year before. Like Pope, Meade hastily withdrew to the north of the Rappahannock. Then learning nothing definite of Lee's movements he retraced his steps and again crossed the Rappahannock and reoccupied Culpeper, leaving a corps at the crossings of the Rappahannock. Here he was informed that Lee, ignoring his manœuvres, had on the 12th forced a

crossing of the Rappahannock at White Sulphur Springs, and having driven Gregg off, was marching northward. Meade was a master at moving his troops, and now, making a forced march that night, he was in Lee's rear next morning. Lee being out of rations, was forced to wait at Warrenton all of the 13th, and this delay enabled Meade to pass by him. On the morning of the 14th Lee sent Ewell and A. P. Hill to Bristoe Station, hoping to make an effective attack on Meade's rear, but "some one blundered." Warren, being attacked by two of Hill's Divisions, occupied a railway cut, and in the fight which ensued cut off and captured 5 guns, 2 stands of colors, and some 450 prisoners, and then marched on after Meade, who now concentrated at Centreville and awaited Lee's attack. Men groaned at a defeat which should have been a victory but for an inexplicable blunder.* As, even had Meade's strongly fortified position been carried or turned, he could have fallen back on Alexandria, as Pope had done, Lee refrained from further attack and returned to his position on the Rappahannock. Meade promptly followed; but his cavalry under Kilpatrick was routed at Buckland, in a way to show that Stuart was not to

* S. P. Lee's "Life of William N. Pendleton."

be caught napping, and to furnish the Army of Northern Virginia with many a joke on the "Buckland Races." The affair at Bristoe Station marred what would otherwise have been a completely successful manœuvre.

Such a fiasco was an experience to which the Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia was little accustomed, and the loss of Jackson was felt anew by his old command. Lee now returned toward Culpeper, forced to abandon the offensive by the want of shoes in his army. Lee wrote his wife on the 19th of October: "I have returned to the Rappahannock. I did not pursue with the main army beyond Bristoe or Broad Run. Our advance went as far as Bull Run, where the enemy was intrenched, extending his right as far as Chantilly, in the yard of which he was building a redoubt. I could have thrown him farther back, but I saw no chance of bringing him to battle, and it would have only served to fatigue our troops by advancing farther. If they had been properly provided with clothes, I would certainly have endeavored to have thrown them north of the Potomac; but thousands were barefooted, thousands with fragments of shoes, and all without overcoats, blankets, or warm clothing. I could not bear to

expose them to certain suffering on an uncertain issue."

On October 28 he wrote her a letter which threw a fine light on the situation of his army as regarded shoes and necessary clothing, and on his own simplicity of life. "I moved yesterday," he says, "into a nice pine thicket, and Perry is to-day engaged in constructing a chimney in front of my tent which will make it warm and comfortable. I have no idea when F. [his son, Brigadier-General W. H. F. Lee] will be exchanged. The Federal authorities still resist all exchanges, because they think it is to our interest to make them. Any desire expressed on our part for the exchange of any individual magnifies the difficulty, as they at once think some great benefit is to result to us from it. His detention is very grievous to me, and, besides, I want his services. I am glad you have some socks for the army. Send them to me. They will come safely. Tell the girls to send all they can. I wish they could make some shoes, too. We have thousands of barefooted men. There is no news. General Meade, I believe, is repairing the railroad, and I presume will come on again. If I could only get some shoes and clothes for the men, I would save him the trouble."

The loss of Vicksburg had done more than the defeat at Gettysburg to overthrow the South. Thenceforth the South was cut in two.

On the 7th of November, Meade, finding Lee not disposed to attack him or repeat the manœuvre which had put Washington in a fright, and conscious of his own superiority in men and equipment, moved forward to the Rappahannock. His left, under French, crossed at Kelly's Ford; his right, under Sedgwick, came, about nightfall, on the Bridge Head, on the near side of the river, at Rappahannock Station, guarding the bridge, occupied by two of Early's Brigades. Making a dash for it, Russell's division rushed the pontoon bridge, surprised and captured the position, with 5 guns, 1,675 men, and 8 stands of colors, with little loss and before the Confederates on the south side of the river knew that the point was being attacked. These "blunders on the part of some one" set the Second Corps to deploring afresh the loss of their old commander. "It makes me sick," wrote the young adjutant-general of the corps, who had been on Jackson's staff. It looked now as though Meade were preparing for a general attack, and with a view to drawing him on where he might renew his attack in a position where disparity of numbers

would not count for so much, Lee, on the night of the 8th of November, withdrew to the western bank of the Rapidan, and there awaited him in the position he had occupied in October.

Finally, on the 26th of November, Meade, spurred on to attack Lee by the urgency of his government and the clamor of the press, moved southward and crossed the Rapidan at the lower fords below Lee's position, with the intention of manœuvring him out of his position and attacking him. Lee promptly "accepted the gage," and withdrawing his troops from his lines that night, by daylight next morning was on Meade's flank, prepared for any move he might make. With his cavalry in front to feel the enemy and ascertain his purpose, he moved his Second Corps under Early (Ewell being sick) to Locust Grove by the old Turnpike and the Raccoon Ford Road, and his Third Corps by the Plank Road. Skirmishing ensued for a time, and about four o'clock it developed into a sharp engagement in which the enemy were driven back from the position they had assumed. That night, learning that Meade was moving in the direction of Orange Court House, Lee, believing that he would now without doubt attack him, withdrew his army to the west side of Mine Run and took a strong

position on the heights above Mine Run, where he awaited Meade's attack for several days. But although Meade brought up his army, and apparently made every preparation for a general battle, on the morning of the 2d of December he had drawn back beyond the Rappahannock. Warren, to whom the conduct of the assault had been confided, had found Lee's position too strong to give promise of its being successfully assaulted, and the expected battle never came off. Two days later Lee wrote his wife as follows: "You will probably have seen that General Meade has retired to his old position on the Rappahannock without giving us battle. I had expected, from his movements and all that I had heard, that it was his intention to do so, and after the first day, when I thought it necessary to skirmish pretty sharply with him on both flanks to ascertain his views, I waited patiently his attack. On Tuesday, however, I thought he had changed his mind, and that night made preparations to move around his left next morning and attack him. But when day dawned he was nowhere to be seen. He had commenced to withdraw at dark Tuesday evening. We pursued to the Rapidan, but he was over. Owing to the nature of the ground, it was to our advantage to

receive rather than to make the attack, and as he about doubled us in numbers, I wished to have that advantage. I am greatly disappointed at his getting off with so little damage, but we do not know what is best for us. I believe a kind God has ordered all things for our good."

After this the weather became so severe that further operations were impossible, and the armies went into winter quarters, Lee along the Virginia Central Railway and in the vicinity of Orange, Meade in the region about Culpeper. The inaction was, however, much in favor of the North; for the South was rapidly being depleted. Lee's army was in a state of such destitution that it is a wonder the men could be kept together. Only their spirit enabled them to stand the hardships of the winter. Barefooted and hungry, they stood it out through the long months of a Virginia winter, and when it is considered that until they joined the army many of these men had never seen snow, and that none of them had ever experienced want of adequate clothing, their resolution is a tribute to their patriotism which can never be excelled. That Lee himself endured hardships and suffered with them in their self-denial was sufficient for them. An incident of this period is related by Colonel Charles Marshall,

General Lee's aide-de-camp. He says: "While the army was on the Rapidan, in the winter of 1863–64, it became necessary, as was often the case, to put the men on very short rations. Their duty was hard, not only on the outposts during the winter, but in the construction of roads, to facilitate communication between the different parts of the army. One day General Lee received a letter from a private soldier whose name I do not now remember, informing him of the work that he had to do, and stating that his rations were not sufficient to enable him to undergo the fatigue. He said, however, that if it was absolutely necessary to put him upon such short allowance, he would make the best of it, but that he and his comrades wanted to know if General Lee was aware that his men were getting so little to eat, because if he was aware of it he was sure there must be some necessity for it. General Lee did not reply directly to the letter, but issued a general order in which he informed the soldiers of his efforts in their behalf, and that their privation was beyond his means of present relief, but assured them that he was making every effort to procure sufficient supplies. After that there was not a murmur in the army, and the hungry men went cheerfully to their hard work."

Lee's private letters to his family speak in their simplicity with an eloquence which no rhetoric could equal. From his camp he writes to his wife on January 24, 1864: "I have had to disperse the cavalry as much as possible to obtain forage for their horses, and it is that which causes trouble. Provisions for the men, too, are very scarce, and with very light diet and light clothing, I fear they suffer, but still they are cheerful and uncomplaining. I received a report from one division the other day, in which it was stated that over 400 men were barefooted and over 1,000 were without blankets."

His letters to his family continually refer to the socks they knitted for his men, and at times he brought and delivered these socks himself. As he lay during this winter confronting Meade's well-equipped army, while his own men, ragged and barefooted and hungry, shivered and danced by turns, his mien was as calm and assured as though the conditions had been reversed. But he must have faced often the stern and tragic fact that his resources, as small as they were then, were steadily dwindling. Whatever the inward grip on his heart of this secret knowledge, which like a vulture was tearing his vitals, to the outer world he was all tranquillity. *Tranquillus in arduis* was the mark of his character.

In the necessary disposal of the cavalry to obtain forage, to which General Lee refers as above stated, the cavalry was stationed at Charlottesville, and General Lee's youngest son, who had been transferred the summer before to the cavalry, having sent him an invitation, received from him a reply, which shows how heavily the burden was weighing on his shoulders.

CAMP ORANGE COURT HOUSE,
*January* 17, 1864.

I enclose a letter for you which has been sent to my care. I hope you are well and all around you. Tell Fitz I grieve over the hardships and sufferings of his men in their late expedition. I would have preferred his waiting for more favorable weather. He accomplished much under the circumstances, but would have done more in better weather. I am afraid he was anxious to get back to the ball. This is a bad time for such things. We have too grave subjects on hand to engage in such trivial amusements. I would rather his officers should entertain themselves in fattening their horses, healing their men, and recruiting their regiments. There are too many Lees on the committee. I like them all to be present at battles, but can excuse them at balls. But the saying is: "Children will be children!" I think he had better move his camp farther from Charlottesville, and perhaps he will get more work and less play. He and I are too old for such as-

semblies. I want him to write me how his men are, his horses, and what I can do to fill up his ranks.

At the end of the first week in February, in pursuance of a not very well-developed plan to hold Lee by a demonstration along the Rapidan while an advance was made on Richmond by way of the Peninsula, Sedgwick was moved forward as if to bring on a battle; but after a sharp skirmish, in which he lost over a thousand men, he retired to his original position, while below Richmond the movements proved equally futile. General Lee, writing of the affair, says (in a letter to Mrs. Lee, dated February 16, 1864): "This day last week we were prepared for battle, but I believe the advance of the enemy was only to see where we were and whether they could injure us. They place their entire loss in killed, wounded, and missing at 1,200, but I think that is exaggerated. Our old friend, Sedgwick, was in command."

At the end of February General Lee narrowly escaped capture at the hands of a cavalry force. under the command of Colonel Dahlgren, who, in a bold raid on Richmond, struck the Virginia Central Railroad a short time after General Lee passed by in a train. Other attempts having

failed, a new method was attempted for the capture of Richmond. Knowing that the city was almost totally unprotected on the south side and contained only local guards, it was conceived that it might be seized by a bold dash made by a picked body of cavalry, who should ride around Lee's flank, and, striking across country, should cross the James some thirty miles above Richmond, where it was fordable, and then, turning down its right bank, enter Richmond. The plan was boldly conceived and begun; but it came to a hapless end. Three columns, numbering 4,000 sabres, set out, respectively under Kilpatrick, Custer, and Dahlgren. Kilpatrick from the north side penetrated the outer defences of Richmond, but was driven out, and only the last-named force ever reached the James. Here, finding it in flood and beyond fording, the "contraband guide" was hanged "according to contract" and an attempt was made to duplicate Stuart's feat and make their way out down the north bank of the river. The force was, however, met and dispersed and Colonel Dahlgren was killed in a charge. On his person were found plans which related to the capture of Richmond, and sent up to Richmond, as among them were entries in a memorandum

book which created a great furor, and were made the subject of a special cartel by the Confederate Government, which Lee forwarded to General Meade. But General Meade promptly disclaimed any knowledge of the incendiary portions of them, and Colonel Dahlgren's father, in a memoir of his son, has declared them a forgery.* General Long states that "it is but justice to the memory of Dahlgren to say that no act of cruelty was perpetrated by him during this hapless expedition." The incident, which called forth recriminating charges of great bitterness at the time, brought from Lee a temperate and wise letter, in which he discusses on the broadest grounds the futility of retaliation, which had been suggested to him, and calls attention to an alleged outrage by some of his own men, who had held up a train and robbed the passengers.

The North was enabled to recruit her armies by drafting all the men she needed, and her command of the sea gave her Europe as a recruiting ground. On October 17, 1863, the President of the United States ordered a draft for 300,000 men. On February 1, 1864, he called for 500,000, allowing a deduction for quotas filled under the

* See J. D. McCabe's "Life of Lee," p. 651; Memoir of Colonel Ulric Dahlgren; Fitz Lee's "Lee," p. 324; Southern Historical Society Papers, April, 1877.

preceding draft; and on March 14, 1864, he issued an additional call for 200,000 more, "to provide an additional reserve for all contingencies." *

The South was almost spent. Her spirit was unquenched, and was, indeed, unquenchable; but her resources, both of treasure and men, were well-nigh exhausted. Her levies for reserves of all men between fifteen and sixty drew from President Davis the lament that she was grinding the seed-corn of the Confederacy. Yet more significantly it satisfied the new general who, with his laurels fresh from the dearly won heights of Missionary Ridge, succeeded (on March 12) the high-minded Meade in the command of the Union army on the Potomac, that a policy of attrition was one, and possibly the only one, which must win in the end. Clear-headed, aggressive, and able, he began his campaign with this policy, from which he never varied, though the attrition wore away two men in his own ranks for every one in Lee's army.

In the spring of 1864 the President of the

* Under the first call 369,380 men were drawn, of whom 52,288 paid commutation; under the second 259,575 men were drawn, of whom 32,678 paid commutation. Again, on July 18, 1864, a call was made for 500,000 more men, of whom 385,163 were furnished; and on December 19, 1864, 300,000 more were called for and 211,755 were furnished. (Rhodes's "History," vol. IV, p. 429, citing "Statistical Rec. Phisterer," pp. 6, 8, 9.)

United States, recognizing that the people, like himself, had grown weary of having generals beaten and armies routed by Lee with an army manifestly inferior in numbers and equipment, took a new step. It was clear now to his mind that the South could not be conquered so long as Lee, at the head of an army of veteran troops, had the power to manœuvre them at will. It was equally clear to him that, whatever the public might think, the South was at last becoming exhausted, while the North was steadily growing stronger. He had some time before come to the conclusion that not Richmond but Lee's army was the proper objective of the Union armies, and he had so written his commanding general, Hooker. He now took a step further. In this state of the case, he set aside Meade, who had failed to destroy Lee after months of endeavor, and called to his aid a general hitherto a stranger to the East, but one who, in the West, had given evidence of abilities which promised to prove the kind which were needed in the situation in Virginia. He was a fighter, and so sturdy was he that he was as ready to fight after a defeat as before.

In the West were several generals who had given that proof of unusual abilities—success—which had been lacking in the East, where the com-

manders were opposed by Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. Grant, Thomas, Sherman, and McPherson had all shown military gifts of a high order. Among these the first in order having such gifts was, possibly, Grant, though it took a long time for his government to recognize them, and it required the close study of a special agent in the person of the Assistant Secretary of War before the lot fell upon him. Like Mr. Lincoln, he was of Southern blood and affiliations by way of Kentucky. He was, however, a native of Ohio. He had graduated at West Point in 1843, and had served with distinction in Mexico, as had most of the soldiers on both sides who attained high rank during the Civil War. He first attracted attention at Molino del Rey, where he got a piece of artillery up in a church tower and contributed to the success of the day. Having fallen into habits of intemperance, he had left the army and for eight years had lived in poverty and obscurity, first on a farm in Missouri and afterward as a clerk in his father's store in Galena, Ill. On the outbreak of the war he had written offering his services to the government, but his letter appears to have been ignored; and he had thereupon shown such zeal and efficiency in the organization of the volun-

teers in Illinois that he was appointed by the governor of that State colonel of the 21st Regiment of Illinois volunteers. His ability presently brought him command of the Department of Cairo, and when he captured Fort Henry, on February 6, 1862, and, following a sharp defeat, in his temporary absence, of his forces besieging Fort Donelson, availed himself promptly of a fatal error of the Confederate commander and captured this fort also, with its garrison of nearly 12,000 men, he began to be esteemed a man to reckon with. In command of the Army of the Tennessee, he had narrowly missed having his army destroyed at Pittsburg Landing in the first day's fight of the battle of Shiloh, and had probably been saved by the death of Albert Sidney Johnston in the hour of victory, and certainly by the opportune arrival of Buell's army next day. But he had shown the resolution and serenity of a constant mind and had continued fighting next day as stoutly as if he had won the day before. He had indeed the gift never to know when he was beaten. At Vicksburg he had increased greatly his reputation by his able transfer of his army from one side of the Mississippi to the other, followed by his brilliant manœuvres and the successful siege and capture

of this important post which had hitherto guarded the Mississippi. And finally, while suffering from a severe injury, he had ridden to Chattanooga, where matters, following on Rosecrans's defeat at Chickamauga, were in a bad way, and, arriving "tired, dirty, and well," had immediately so straightened out the tangles and infused spirit and courage that within a month he won the battle of Missionary Ridge, or Chattanooga (November 23–25), and secured possession of Chattanooga and Knoxville and command of Eastern Tennessee and the adjacent regions. Such, in brief, was the previous record of the man to whom Mr. Lincoln now turned for aid.

On the 10th of March,* 1864, Mr. Lincoln appointed General Ulysses S. Grant lieutenant-general in command of all the armies of the Union, and General Grant, on the 23d of March, took personal command of the armies in the East with the stipulation, it is said, that he was to be given such troops as he needed and was not to be interfered with by the government in Washington. It was without doubt a wise precaution that he took, for otherwise he might never have survived the Wilderness and Cold Harbor.

*The commission was dated March 9, and was delivered to him by Mr. Lincoln in the presence of his cabinet the following day.

Grant was now nearly forty-two years old, while Lee was fifty-seven. We have pictures of them both as they impressed men capable of drawing their portraits.

This is a picture of Grant given by Richard H. Dana, who fell in with him at Willard's Hotel as he was about to leave for the army on the Rapidan: "A short, round-shouldered man, in a very tarnished major-general's uniform. . . . There was nothing marked in his appearance. He had no gait, no *station*, no manner, rough, light-brown whiskers, a blue eye, and rather a scrubby look withal. A crowd formed round him; men looked, stared at him, as if they were taking his likeness, and two generals were introduced. Still, I could not get his name. It was not Hooker. Who could it be? He had a cigar in his mouth, and rather the look of a man who did, or once did, take a little too much to drink. I inquired of the book-keeper. 'That is General Grant.' I joined the starers. I saw that the ordinary, scrubby-looking man, with a slightly seedy look, as if he was out of office and on half pay, and nothing to do but hang round the entry of Willard's, cigar in mouth, had a clear blue eye, and a look of resolution, as if he could not be trifled with, and an entire indifference to the

crowd about him. Straight nose, too. Still, to see him talking and smoking in the lower entry of Willard's, in that crowd, in such times—the generalissimo of our armies, on whom the destiny of the empire seemed to hang! . . . He gets over the ground queerly. He does not march, nor quite walk; but pitches along as if the next step would bring him on his nose. But his face looks firm and hard, and his eye is clear and resolute, and he is certainly natural, and clear of all appearance of self-consciousness. How war, how all great crises, bring us to the one-man power!" *

It should be said, and the fact has been much overlooked, that while to Grant's dogged resolution to wear out his opponent, no matter what the cost to his own side, was due in the end the exhaustion of the South; yet the tactical detail with which the military operations were conducted was to a considerable extent attributable to Meade. The commander at Gettysburg has never gotten the credit generally that he deserves. Because he could not destroy Lee at or after Gettysburg, and failed to attain a decided success in the autumn campaign following, he lost the prestige that he should have had for an ac-

* Adams's "Dana," vol. II, p. 272. Rhodes's "History of the United States," vol. IV, pp. 438, 439.

complishment greater than any other general had attained. And in the campaign of 1864–65 he conducted the military operations of the Army of the Potomac, though he did not dictate the policy. Grant himself declared later in his official report of July 22, 1865, that, while he commanded all the armies, he had tried, as far as possible, to leave General Meade in independent command of the Army of the Potomac. "My instructions for that army," he said, "were all through him and were general in their nature, leaving all the details and execution to him." * He directed the general operations, but Meade directed mainly the movements of the several corps and under him fought the battles. Yet undoubtedly Grant was the master spirit and the abler soldier.

Mr. Lincoln had some time before reached the conclusion, as most other thinking men had, that so long as Lee's army remained in the field, commanded by Lee, the South could not be subjugated. And in this view General Grant wholly concurred. The destruction of Lee's army, therefore, became the avowed object of both Lincoln and Grant. The method was simple in conception—to give man for man—or, if that would not accomplish the object, to give two men for one till

* Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865," p. 6.

the dread tale was exhausted. In execution it required not only man for man, not only two men for one, but two men for every one that Lee had in his army.

The infantry of the Army of the Potomac was, prior to the advance on Richmond in the spring of 1864, organized on Meade's suggestion and formed in three grand corps, the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps, commanded respectively by the three veteran generals, Hancock, Warren, and Sedgwick, each corps numbering about 25,000 men. To these were soon added the Ninth Corps under Burnside. The cavalry was commanded by General Sheridan, a young officer whom Grant had brought from the West with him, having observed in him unusual abilities and the fighting quality which he himself possessed.

In general terms the plan adopted for the new campaign was to have Butler, who commanded at Fortress Monroe, move on Richmond by way of the James, the York, and the Peninsula, and for Grant to march the Army of the Potomac by a route parallel with the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railway, which railway, with the Rappahannock and the Potomac, formed his line of communication with his base and with Washington. This base he established at Belle Plain.

There were men and supplies of all kinds in abundance. The difficulty in the way was the Army of Northern Virginia with its general. This army lay along the Rapidan in the Piedmont, about Orange and Gordonsville, at the junction of the Orange and Alexandria Railway, and the Virginia Central Railway, which led south-east to Richmond and west to the valley of Virginia and to the south-west. One plan which was considered at Washington was to move by Lee's left flank against this important line of communication and thence on Richmond; but for good reasons this plan was discarded and the movement by Lee's right flank was adopted. This latter plan, though it led through more difficult country than the other, would place Grant's lines of communication on the opposite side of his army from Lee and would effectually secure them from attack. It would also enable him to cover Washington and receive reinforcements as needed.

Grant's plan was a comprehensive one. In brief, it was to "attack all along the line," and thus, first, keep all the Confederate forces fully engaged, so that one army should not be able to reinforce any other; secondly, destroy all the lines of communication between Richmond and the South and South-west; thirdly, destroy all the

sources of supply of the Southern armies; fourthly, destroy those armies themselves and finally capture Richmond. In accordance with this plan, Sherman, with his army of 100,000 men, was to march from Chattanooga eastward through Georgia and the Carolinas; Sigel, with his army of 20,000 men, was to march from Western Virginia on the two lines that connected Richmond with the valley of Virginia at Staunton and with the South-west at Lynchburg; Butler was to march on Richmond with his army of 40,000 men from Fortress Monroe by way of the Peninsula and the James and co-operate with Grant; and finally, Grant himself was to march on Richmond with his great army of 140,000 men by way of the region lying between the Virginia Central Railroad and the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad.

On the day agreed on, the 4th of May, the campaign began. Grant crossed the Rapidan on his march to Richmond, Butler moved on Richmond from Fortress Monroe by way of the James, Sherman set out on his march across the South, and Sigel proceeded with his movements, a column of 6,000 men, under Averell, marching on South-west Virginia, while Sigel himself, with his main army, moved on the upper Shenandoah Valley to menace the Virginia Central Railway

and the railway from Charlottesville to Lynchburg and the South-west. All of these operations held direct relation with the Richmond campaign,* and eventually all contributed their full share to its successful termination. For in the end Richmond fell because its lines of communication with the region which supplied Lee's army were destroyed.

Grant, resolved on his policy of "persistent hammering" (a phrase coined by him after the events which proved its effectiveness), and, assured of vast levies and of a free hand, to carry out his plan on his own line no matter what the cost, crossed the Rapidan on the night of the 3d of May, 1864. Marching by Ely and Germana Fords, as Lee had predicted he would, he committed himself boldly to the tangled forest of the Wilderness, where one year before Hooker had met such signal defeat. His army numbered over 140,000 men of all arms—more than double the number that Lee now commanded—and he had 318 field guns. His equipment was possibly the best that any army could boast that ever took the field. His baggage train would, as he states, have stretched in line to Richmond, sixty-odd miles away. Lee had, with which to oppose him,

*"The Shenandcah Valley in 1864," George E. Pond, p. 5.

62,000 men of all arms and 224 guns. But the men were the Army of Northern Virginia, and a better weapon was never fitted to the hand of a more skilful master. Whatever measure of fame he had attained hitherto, it was to be more than doubled in the ensuing campaign.

Lee has been criticised of late for not having posted Longstreet nearer to the prospective battlefield of the Wilderness than Gordonsville. It was not a matter of choice with him, but of necessity. The dispersion of his troops was due to the ever-growing difficulty of subsistence. He probably knew as well as his critics the disadvantages of such wide dispersion, and had his orders for their concentration been promptly carried out, he would have struck Grant on the first day with his full force instead of with only half of it.

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